

UA 210/02

Fear of torture or ill-treatment

11 July 2002

TURKEY

Necati Abay (m)
Sonnur Sa_lamer (f)
Nadiye Gürbüz (f)
Ali Ihsan Topçu (m)
Remziye Tur_un (f)
Gökçen Arabul (m)
Altan Koman (m)
Gökhan Özdemir (m)
Seçil Gültekin (f)
Nuran Do_an (f)
Özgür Çubuk (m)
Burcu Gümü_ (f)
Mülge Molval_ (f)
Murat Güner (m)

The 14 people named above were detained following a police raid on the offices of the weekly journal "Yeniden At_l_m" (New Advance) on 10 July. They are being held at the Anti-Terror Branch of Police Headquarters in the borough of Aksaray in Istanbul and are at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

During the raid, police officers from the anti-terror branch allegedly confiscated technical equipment, the newspaper's archives and destroyed computers. Part of the office was also destroyed.

The offices of the Union of Female Labourers and "Dayan_ma" (Solidarity) newspaper were also raided on the same day, in what appears to be an operation against certain leftist circles. Amnesty International has repeatedly received allegations of torture of staff at "Yeniden At_l_m" and similar newspapers. Süleyman Yeter, trade unionist and journalist of "Dayan_ma", died as a result of torture in early 1999 (See UA 57/99, EUR 44/28/99, 30 March 1999) and Asiye Güzel, correspondent of "At_l_m", was reportedly raped under torture in 1997.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture appears to be used routinely in police and gendarmerie stations, to extract confessions, elicit information about illegal organizations, intimidate detainees into becoming police informers or as unofficial punishment for presumed support of illegal organizations. Torture methods in Turkey documented by Amnesty International include severe beatings, being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, suspending by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of the 15 people named above, who were detained during a police raid on 10 July;
- calling for detainees to be given immediate access to lawyers, their families and any medical attention they require and asking to be informed of any charges brought against them;
- urging that they are not tortured or ill-treated while in police custody;
- reminding the Turkish government of its obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights, to which Turkey is a state party, which states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

APPEALS TO:

Istanbul Chief of Police

Mr Hasan Özdemir
Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü
Istanbul Emniyet Müdürlüğü
Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Chief of Police, Istanbul, Turkey
Fax: + 90 212 534 8571

Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

Minister of the Interior

Mr Rütü Kazım Yücelen
Ministry of Interior

Çiğleri Bakanlık
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 418 1795

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Nejat Arseven

Office of the Prime Minister,

Bakanlık,

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 417 0476

Salutation: Dear Minister

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 August 2002.