

TURKEYK.Ö. (f) (Anonymity requested, name known to Amnesty International), 51

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of K.Ö. who was reportedly tortured and raped by police officers on 19 November 1999 and has been subjected to threats and physical attacks ever since.

According to K.Ö., three armed plainclothes officers, who introduced themselves as police from the Anti-terror branch, came to her house in the Gülbahçe district of Adana at about midnight on 19 November 1999. They asked about the whereabouts of her daughter who has reportedly not come home for five years and is alleged by the police to have joined the PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party, an armed opposition group). The policemen verbally abused and threatened K.Ö and then punched and kicked her when she said she did not know where her daughter was. After attempting to strangle her, K.Ö was blindfolded and raped with a truncheon. She was later found unconscious and bleeding by her son.

Nine days later, policemen came to K.Ö's house and threatened to kill her and her children if she made a complaint about what had happened. Nonetheless, on 7 December she lodged an official complaint against the police officers and in February 2000 spoke publicly about what had occurred. Police officers have raided her house several times since then, beaten her and threatened her with death. Adana State Prosecutor has issued a decision not to prosecute anyone over her complaint. K.Ö.'s lawyers appealed on 12 June against that decision. The lawyers are waiting for the court to make its decision on the appeal.

A group of men wearing snow masks allegedly came to K.Ö's house on 24 June 2000 and tried to force her to sign a statement alleging that the person/s responsible for the rape were from the PKK. When K.Ö. refused, they beat her and forced their guns against her neck.

A woman reporter with the now closed daily newspaper *Özgür Bak*, who wrote an article about what had happened to K.Ö., was also detained in Adana on 18 February 2000. She was threatened and insulted before being released. A representative of Amnesty International visited K.Ö. with others at her home in April and reported that police followed them to K.Ö.'s home. There was also a heavy and intimidating police presence in the neighbourhood.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

In recent years, Amnesty International has documented several cases of rape and sexual assault committed by security force members in Turkey. During incommunicado detention in police or gendarmerie custody both women and men are routinely stripped naked. Torture methods include electro-shocks and beating directed at genitals and women's breasts, sexual abuse, rape or rape threats. In the summer of 1997, a legal aid project in Istanbul was set up to help women who had been raped or who had experienced other forms of sexual torture by officials, by attempting to bring the perpetrators to justice. Some 100 women, more than 80 of them Kurds, have sought the support of the project. Nearly 40 of them reported rape, 65 sexual abuse. The suspected perpetrators are mostly police officers; others are gendarmes, soldiers, village guards or repentants (former members of armed opposition groups who have become informers). They are rarely held accountable for their alleged crimes. Amnesty International has documented a general climate of impunity for torturers. Additionally, medical findings can only rarely prove beyond doubt that rape has occurred and medical reports

can be difficult to obtain, especially if time has elapsed since the incident. The Turkish legal authorities have been reluctant to accept psychiatric reports as evidence.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or German:**

- urging the Turkish authorities to take steps to ensure the safety of the woman known as K.Ö., who was reportedly raped and tortured by police on 19 November 1999, and asking for information about any action that has been taken to protect her;
- calling for the continuing investigation into K.Ö.'s allegations of rape and torture to be conducted in an independent and thorough manner, including an evaluation of relevant psychiatric evidence, and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice;
- calling on the Turkish authorities to instruct law enforcement personnel that rape in custody is an act of torture and will not be tolerated.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Justice

Professor Hikmet Sami Türk

Adalet Bakan\_

Adalet Bakanl\_\_\_\_,

06659 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Adalet Bakani, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: + 90 312 418 5667**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Minister of Interior

Mr Saadettin Tantan

Ici\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_\_

06644 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams:Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes:+ 90 312 418 17 95**

**Salutation:Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for human rights

Mr Rü\_tü Kaz\_m Yücelen

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba\_bakanl\_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Faxes: + 90 312 417 0476**

and to diplomatic representatives of TURKEY accredited to your country.

**Please could appeal writers in EU member countries also send copies to their Minister of Foreign Affairs.**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 August 2000.