

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/168/96

EXTRA 166/96

Fear of "disappearance" / Fear of torture 29 October 1996

TURKEY Fatma Turunç (f), mother of three
Kanber Turunç, husband of Fatma, aged 40+

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Fatma and Kanber Turunç, a Kurdish married couple from Gaziantep.

Kanber Turunç, a street seller, has not been seen since 15 October 1996 when he failed to return home in the evening after the day's business. Ten days later, on 25 October at 1am, some 10 police officers reportedly came to the Turunç's home in Gaziantep and detained Fatma in front of her three children (aged one and a half, seven and 10), now left with a relative.

When Fatma's father-in-law went to the police to inquire about her detention, a police officer asked him "*What relation is Kanber to you?*". He replied, "*He is my son - is he being held?*" The answer was, "*No, we know nothing about him*". Fatma's detention has been unofficially acknowledged by the police who have accepted food on her behalf brought for her by the family. Under current legislation she may be held for 15 days before being charged or released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

People suspected of offences under the Anti-Terror Law can be held in police custody without access to family, friends or legal counsel for up to 30 days in the 10 provinces under State of Emergency, and for 15 days in the rest of Turkey. When not being interrogated, detainees are held in cramped, airless and insanitary conditions. With no access to the outside world they are at the mercy of their interrogators. Torture is often applied to extract confessions, to elicit information about illegal organizations, to intimidate detainees into becoming police informers or as informal punishment for presumed support of illegal organizations. Torture methods include being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, hanging by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

Procedures laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for the prompt and proper registration of detainees, and for notification of their families, are almost universally ignored. Lack of prompt registration and notification is extremely distressing for the families of detainees, and creates the conditions in which "disappearances" and torture can occur.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Kanber Turunç who has been missing in Gaziantep since 15 October and is believed to be held in unacknowledged police custody, and of his wife Fatma, detained 10 days later at their home;
- calling for an immediate investigation into the whereabouts of Kanber Turunç and for his family and lawyer to be promptly informed of the results;
- seeking assurances that Fatma Turunç, held at the Anti-Terror Branch of Gaziantep Police Headquarters will not be subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against her.

APPEALS TO:

1. Gaziantep Police Chief:

Mr Hüseyin Çapk_n

Emniyet Müdürlü_ü

Gaziantep, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Gaziantep, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2. Gaziantep Chief Public Prosecutor:

Mr Ünal Ar_k

Cumhuriyet Ba_savc_s_

Hükümet Kona__

Gaziantep, Turkey

Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Bassavcisi, Gaziantep, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Chief Public Prosecutor

3. State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Lütfü Esengül

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Human Rights Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr; 42099 basb tr

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mrs Tansu Çiller

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

D__i__leri Bakanl____

06100 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: +90 312 419 1547

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 30 November 1996.