

# £TURKEY

## @Families of "disappeared" subjected to brutal treatment

People are still "disappearing" in Turkey. On the evening of 7 June 1995 villagers Ahmet Cingöz and Edip Aksoy were detained, in front of witnesses, from a tea garden in the Da\_kap\_ district of Diyarbak\_r, in the southeast of the country.

Several witnesses saw them detained by plainclothes policemen equipped with two-way radios and automatic weapons who arrived in a white car and showed their identity cards. The families of Ahmet Cingöz and Edip Aksoy have repeatedly appealed in vain for information about their whereabouts to the Diyarbak\_r State Security Court prosecutor's office, where the detention should have been registered.

The practice of "disappearance" is a human rights violation inflicted not only upon the victims but also upon their families. The families of more than a hundred people who have "disappeared" since 1991 have met a callous lack of concern from the government, while being subjected to ridicule and insults, ill-treatment, or even detention and imprisonment by local security forces. K\_ymet Tekin said that she was kicked and insulted when she went to inquire about her son Ahmet Tekin, detained from a bus travelling from Diyarbak\_r to the village of Darakol on 7 May 1994 (see AI Index: EUR 44/51/94). Police called her "the mother of a terrorist". Her son was never seen again. Bedir Ay, father of Piro Ay, a farmer who "disappeared" after being detained by Special Team members and gendarmes at Çay village, near Derik, on 16 April 1994, travelled throughout southeast Turkey in search of his son until he was arrested in August. He remained in prison for more than six months.

Hurmuz Diril, an elder of Kovankaya village in Hakkari province, was imprisoned when he went to Beytü\_\_ebab to make inquiries about two "disappeared" children of his village. \_lyas Edip Diril (15) and Zeki Ercan Diril (17) "disappeared" after being detained by village guards on 15 May 1994 and handed over to the gendarmerie (see EUR 44/01/95). Hurmuz Diril is now in Mu\_ Prison charged with sheltering members of an armed organization. The same charges have been brought against four other members of the village arrested in May 1995 and now held in Beytü\_\_ebab Prison: Mesih Diril, \_shak Diril, Epro Diril and Yanvan Yaram\_\_.

Following further "disappearances" and abductions in Istanbul, relatives of several victims came together to get answers about the fate of the "disappeared", and to persuade the authorities to carry out proper investigations and bring those responsible to justice (see *Mothers of the "disappeared" take action*, AI Index: EUR 44/55/95).

On 1 June, the Turkish Human Rights Association (HRA) began a campaign on "disappearance", but was refused permission by the governors of both Istanbul and Ankara to use a wall poster for the campaign which bears the words "An end to 'disappearances' - those responsible must be brought to justice" and a picture of a pair of shoes<sup>1</sup>. On 24 June HRA members held a press conference with 40 relatives of the "disappeared" and then left pairs of shoes in Güven Park in Ankara (rather

Banned Turkish Human Rights  
Association poster: *"An end to  
'disappearances' - bring those responsible  
to justice"*

than in front of the Interior  
Ministry, which they were  
forbidden to approach).

Amnesty International  
is gravely concerned at the brutal harassment of families of the "disappeared", who have  
been subjected to repeated detention and police brutality over the past two months.

Emine Ocak is the mother of Hasan Ocak who was detained by police in Istanbul  
on 21 March and later found buried in an unnamed grave. She was sentenced to one  
month's imprisonment, together with Birsen Gülünay, wife of Hasan Gülünay who

<sup>1</sup> Shoes have become a symbol in their relatives' campaign for the "disappeared". The shoes  
which Metin Can, President of Elaz\_\_ Human Rights Association, had been wearing when he was  
abducted on 21 February 1993 were found some days later placed near his home. When he was found  
dead, there were no shoes on his body, which showed signs of torture.

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"disappeared" in July 1992, for shouting 'We want our sons' during a hearing at Ankara State Security Court on 11 April 1995. The two women were later taken to Ankara Central Closed Prison to serve their sentences.

It is traditional in Turkey to visit the grave of a friend or relative on the 40th day after burial. On 1 July, Hasan Ocak's relatives and others were observing this tradition when 42 people were detained from near his grave in Küçükköy Cemetery and taken to Küçükköy police station where some of the detainees were beaten, dragged along the ground and insulted while in custody overnight. Twenty-four of the victims of beating, including Hasan Ocak's sister and mother, made a formal complaint to Gaziosmanpaşa Public Prosecutor and were examined by the Forensic Medicine Institute. The Institute's report has not yet been made public. The victims also held a press conference, and showed journalists the injuries caused by the ill-treatment.

(1 to 1) Hüsnüye Acer, Emine Ocak and Hüseyin Yalcinkaya following their detention.

Testimony of Maside Ocak, sister of Hasan Ocak, concerning the detentions at her brother's graveside:

*On 1 July we visited Hasan's grave. We just did what people normally do on such occasions. We stood in silence, then a friend of my brother made a speech. Then we went to visit the grave of Rıdvan Karakoç who had also been murdered while in police detention earlier in the year, and who was buried in the same cemetery. His brother Hasan was with us, and what happened to us, happened to him too.*

*There were police everywhere. When we got to the Cemevi (the local religious centre of the Alawite minority) they were following us. There we got into a minibus. As we left the district, we were stopped by about 200 or 250 police and anti-riot squad. The police claimed to have received information that there was a molotov cocktail on the bus. They were carrying machine-guns, and we did not trust them in view of the fact that the same police had randomly machine-gunned people in the disturbances in March. We said we would not get out of the bus. First they got me, my mother and my father, and put us in a vehicle, beating us all the while. Then they broke the windows of the bus, dragged people out and put them in police*

vehicles. All you could see was truncheons rising and falling, and kicking feet. They put us in police vehicles and drove us to Küçükköy Police Station where the beating continued. They mainly used truncheons, but they also beat our heads against cupboards. Five of us were taken to Aksaray Anti-Terror Branch where they were subjected to electric shocks and hanging by the wrists tied behind their backs.

(r to l) Hakki Gerçek, Hüseyin Yalcinkaya and 16-year-old Deniz Telek following their detention

*On 2 July we were brought before the prosecutor who released us all. However, three of us were taken to the Anti-Terror Branch, of whom two were released three days later. The other, Güzel Servin, was committed to prison - I do not know on what charges. On 3 July we gave our press conference and went for treatment at the Turkish Human Rights Foundation. On 4 July we complained. At the moment the complaint is at the*

*investigation stage. It is not clear how long this will last, or if a prosecution will be opened. We, on the other hand, are apparently being charged with illegal demonstration - breach of Statute 2911.*

On 8 July 1995 a sit-down protest in Istanbul by relatives of the "disappeared" was broken up by police. According to the daily newspaper *Cumhuriyet* (Republic), about 41 people were detained by police wielding truncheons. A lawyer who observed the incident told Amnesty International: "While they were detaining people, they were hitting them. They hit Emine Ocak with a truncheon on the head as they took her into custody - she remained in detention for about 10 hours before being released". The families had been demonstrating by sitting down in Istanbul's Istiklal Street every Saturday since 3 June 1995. On this occasion, it appears that the authorities were worried at the fact that the families had declared their intention to start that day from Istiklal Street on a walk to Ankara.

Hatice Toraman, mother of Hüseyin Toraman who "disappeared" in 1991, was detained, together with 35 other relatives of "disappearance" victims, on 9 July while travelling from Istanbul to Ankara to see the Human Rights Minister Algan Hacalo\_lu. She told Amnesty International, "A woman police officer was very harsh with one of the mothers. I told the policewoman that there was no need to speak to

her like that - the only reason she was there was that she had lost her son. The policewoman replied: 'God willing, she will lose another'."

The 36 people were then left to continue their journey, but they never managed to speak to the Human Rights Minister. They were stopped at Sincan Police Station on the outskirts of Ankara by an armoured car and seven police minibuses. The police told them that they were refused entry into the capital on "orders from above". The relatives were kept in the stationary bus for more than 24 hours before being followed away from the city by police vehicles.

Hatice Toraman told Amnesty International: "The families of the 'disappeared' have toured the cities of Western Turkey. We light candles at the crossroads at Kadıköy on the Asian shore of Istanbul on Wednesdays, and in Freedom Square in Bakırköy on the opposite side of the city on Saturdays to remember our children.

The police insult us and swear at us. I was hit with a truncheon when the police broke up our vigil at Galatasaray in Istanbul on 8 July. A young policeman shouted at me, 'If we were allowed, I would gun you all down'. We face beatings and arrest, but we cannot give up our search for our children."

The relatives of Bekta Avcu, a teacher abducted by armed members of the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) on 24 October 1993, are suffering the same anguish as the relatives of the "disappeared". Bekta Avcu's wife and parents have been seeking news of his fate ever since the night he was taken off at gunpoint. Another member of the village who had been taken prisoner spent several days with Bekta Avcu before seeing him taken away to an unknown destination.

Bekta Avcu, the Principal of Yeniköy Middle School near Bingöl, was apparently abducted because of his professional status as a teacher and because of his Turkish ethnic origin. In the autumn of 1994 the PKK killed several teachers whom they had taken prisoner. Amnesty International has received no reply to its repeated appeals to the PKK to release Bekta Avcu.