

UA 286/94 Torture / Fear of torture / Arbitrary Detention

22 July 1994

TURKEY

Cemil Timur)
 Zeydin Timur) from Evrek village
 _evket Timur)
 Hasan Aykut
 Fehim Yalçın from _epire village
 Saadi Özlü and his brother
 Osman Özlü from Sergivan village

and an estimated 1,500 Kurdish villagers, including women and children

Amnesty International fears that the above villagers, held by the security forces in the village of Evrek, near Beytu__ebab in Hakkari province in southern Turkey since early July 1994, are being subjected to torture or other ill-treatment. These detentions have occurred in the course of the burning and brutal evacuation of Kurdish villages during military operations against guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), and the setting up of containment areas in which displaced villagers are being held in appalling conditions.

A number of villages surrounding Evrek have been forcibly evacuated and many houses and crops burned by security forces because of the villagers' refusal to join the system of village guards (villagers paid and armed by the government to combat guerrillas of the PKK). The villagers' identity cards have been confiscated, effectively detaining them as anyone moving about in the area without proper identification faces the risk of interrogation for illegal activities or even extrajudicial execution. Villagers trying to flee are being turned back. They have not been charged with any offence and Amnesty International is appealing that they be allowed to leave. There have been reports that villagers have been beaten in Evrek. The lack of proper registration also exposes them to the risk of "disappearance".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Four villagers (names withheld for their safety) reported the following from Damlatepe concerning the treatment of villagers held in another containment area:

After a clash with PKK guerrillas, the security forces began on 7 July the forcible evacuation of Akçayurt (Kurdish name: Dernan), Akçayurt (Derno), Kaladibi (Horsel), Sar_budak (Melekan) villages and their outlying districts of Sakl_ca (Hursik) and Yayladere (_eleheydan), situated between Genç and Hani in Diyarbak_r province. They burned many houses, barns and livestock and destroyed irrigation pumps and crops. On 8 July Hac_Sait Mete (67) of Sar_budak village was shot dead while taking his sheep to pasture. His body was buried by soldiers under rocks.

An estimated 2,000 evacuated villagers, including women and children, were herded into a containment area set up by the security forces adjacent to the Topçular Gendarmerie Post near Damlatepe and held for a week in cruel and inhuman conditions. Many were reported to have been severely tortured there by members of the Special Team (heavily armed security force members trained for close combat with guerrillas and acting under the authority of the Interior Ministry).

While some were permitted to shelter in a schoolhouse and health centre, others were forced to lie in the fierce sun. Much of the time they were left hungry

and thirsty.

Four women wearing clothes of red, yellow and green, the colours of Kurdish nationalism, were taken away and subjected to torture. They were later set free. Emine Çeliksöz of Yayladere village, who was pregnant, was left in labour for several hours in the burning sun while the security forces prevented other women from helping her. Children were beaten and kicked.

Mehmet B_çakç_, Ahmet B_çakç_ and Hasan B_çakç_, together with the daughters of the village imam (prayer leader) were kept for three days in the health centre where soldiers humiliated and sexually assaulted the women.

Sisters Suzan Atsan (32) and Zeliha Atsan (35) were taken by Special Team members to the Çem_el stream just outside the containment area, and repeatedly held under water over a period of approximately two hours, after which they had extreme difficulty in breathing, suffering violent coughing fits and fever.

Mehmet Çeliksöz (headman of Yayladere), Aziz B_çakç_, Kas_m Çeliksöz, Heybet Çeliksöz, Yusuf Çeliksöz and three other men were beaten unconscious, and filmed with weapons arranged around them. The film was shown on TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) with a commentary indicating that they were "eight terrorists killed by security forces". All eight are still alive, and four are now sheltering in Adana. Aziz B_çakç_'s teeth were broken in the beating.

The newspaper *Hürriyet* reported that the villages had been burned by PKK guerrillas - a claim denied by the inhabitants. On 15 July the containment area began to be emptied. The families have since fled to Bingöl and Adana.

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

- expressing great concern about the detention, brutal treatment and torture of large numbers of villagers, including women, children and old people, in containment areas set up after the forcible evacuation and destruction of Kurdish villages;
- urging that the identity cards of the villagers currently held in Evrek be returned, and that the villagers be permitted to leave, unless charged with criminal offences;
- seeking assurances that such large-scale and arbitrary detentions will cease immediately and that all allegations of ill-treatment and torture will be impartially investigated.

APPEALS TO

1) Chief of the Turkish General Staff:

General Do_an Güre_
Bakanl_klar
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: General Güres, Bakanliklar, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795

Salutation: Dear General Güre_

2) Minister of the Interior:

Mr Nahit Ment_e
Içisleri Bakanl____
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 428 4346
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:
Mr Hikmet Çetin
D__i__leri Bakanl____
06100 Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: 90 312 287 3869

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 2 September 1994.