

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

25 January 1991

TURKEY:

Cahit Özgür Baharlı_)
Metin Turan) musicians from the Grup Ekin
O_ur Tuzun)
Gamze Turan (f), chairperson of DEMKAD (Democratic Women's Assn)
Ya_ar Demircan
Nuran Askeri (f), chairperson of TAYAD Ankara branch
Saadet Toksoy (f), secretary of TAYAD Ankara branch
Fatma Tokay (f), member of TAYAD (Prisoners' Relatives Solidarity
Hüseyin Can Bal_canlı Association)
Pa_a Çobanba_, TAYAD member
Ya_ar Selçuk, student at Gazi University, Ankara
Melda Gül (f), from Tav_r magazine
Bülent ... from Tav_r magazine
Bülent Ba_c_, from Mücadele magazine

Thirteen people were taken into police custody when police raided the premises of Tavir magazine in Ankara at about 1800 hours on 24 January. Tavir (Attitude) is a publication dealing with "history and culture". Bülent Ba_c_ was taken into police custody from his home, reportedly when he refused to surrender photographs of a demonstration taken the previous day. The reason for the detentions is not known, but it is thought that they may be connected to a demonstration held in Ankara on Wednesday. The detainees are being held incommunicado at Ankara Police Headquarters and it is feared that they are being interrogated under torture.

Several of those detained have been held before: Nuran Askeri, Fatma Tokay and Can Bal_canlı were previously detained on 5 October 1990; Gamze Turan was previously detained on 22 November; Saadet Toksoy was previously detained on 27 November; Bülent Ba_c_ was previously detained at the beginning of October and again on 28 November and alleges that he was tortured on both occasions.

A student, Birtan Altunba_, who was also detained on 5 October, was detained again at the beginning of January and held for seven days at the Political Branch of Ankara Police Headquarters. On 23 January he was reported to have died as the result of torture after having been transferred from Police Headquarters to Gülhane Military Hospital. A released fellow-detainee stated that he witnessed Birtan Altunba_ being tortured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkey ratified the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture on 25 February 1988 and the UN Convention Against Torture on 2 August 1988. However, all information available to Amnesty International indicates that torture is still widespread and systematic in Turkey. Allegations of torture have continued since the transfer of power to a civilian government in 1983. Most allegations relate to ill-treatment of detainees in police custody during their initial interrogation when they are usually denied access to relatives or a lawyer. Under current legislation the maximum detention period before being formally charged or released is 24 hours; in cases involving three or more

suspects or due to the 'nature of the crime' it may be extended to 15 days. This period may be extended to 30 days in areas under emergency legislation or martial law. Emergency legislation is currently in force in ten provinces.

In August 1990, the Turkish government derogated from Articles 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights, all of which contain important safeguards for human rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- urging that the 14 detainees named above are given prompt access to their families and lawyers and that they are not ill-treated while in detention;
- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

APPEALS TO:

President Turgut Özal
Devlet Ba_kanli_i
06100 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: President Özal, Ankara, Turkey
Telexes: 42875 BBK TR
Faxes: (via Press Office) + 90 4 168 5012

Ankara Emniyet Müdürü
Hasan Özdemir
Ankara Chief of Police
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Ankara, Turkey

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 March 1991.