

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

8 May 1991

TURKEY: Azize Yalçin (f), aged 21)
Server Özer, aged 22)
Sait Ersoy, aged 25) all students at Diyarbakir
Tahir Elçi, aged 26) University
Ramazan Dani_, aged 21)
Asif, aged 25)

Sedat Esmer) lycee pupil (6th form)

Vedat Renkligül, aged 17)
Siddik Adiyaman, aged 17)
Yavuz Çelik, aged 17) all pupils at Fatih Lycee
Cemal Aydın, aged 17)
plus three others)

Hakan Bingöm, aged 20

On 26 April 1991, Azize Yalçin and the five other students from Diyarbakir University named above were detained in Diyarbakir. The reason for their detention is not known, but may be in connection with preparations for banned Labour Day events.

On 29 April 1991, Sedat Esmer was detained by gendarmerie in Kulp near Diyarbakir, after they raided his home and found copies of various political magazines. He is said to have been held in Kulp for three days and was then transferred to Diyarbakir.

On 30 April 1991, Vedat Renkligül and six fellow-pupils from Fatih Lycee in Diyarbakir were detained. They had attended a solidarity meeting for the Kurdish refugees from Iraq and a subsequent demonstration on 14 April. No other possible reason for their detention is known.

On 1 May 1991, Hakan Bingöm was detained at a Labour Day demonstration in Diyarbakir.

All the detainees named above continue to be held incommunicado. Under Emergency Legislation in force in the region they may be held for 30 days before being charged or released. It is not known where in Diyarbakir they are being held and it is feared that they are being interrogated under torture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Labour Day, 1 May, has a special meaning for workers and students in Turkey. Since the military coup in 1980, it has been abolished as a public holiday and demonstrations and rallies have been banned, but the day has retained its symbolic meaning. Both peaceful and violent actions by small groups have been the target of intensified security measures each year leading to the arrest of many political activists before and on Labour Day. This year some 3,000 people were reportedly detained throughout the country, but most have been released by now.

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority which is not officially recognized by the authorities, but is estimated to number some 10 million people. The Kurdish population lives mainly in southeastern Turkey. Frequent allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been received from the region and the number of torture allegations increased substantially after the 1980 military coup. Since August 1984, when Kurdish guerrillas - members of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) - started armed attacks, an alarming number of reports of ill-treatment of detainees by the security forces have come from the eastern and southeastern provinces, where more than 2,000 lives so far have been lost in the continuing fighting.

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In May 1990, the Turkish government issued Decrees 424 and 425 (in December replaced by Decree 430), further extending the already extraordinary powers of the Emergency Legislation Governor. Subsequently, in August 1990, the 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.

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, including Diyarbakir.

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

- urging that all 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 their current whereabouts and of any charges against them.

APPEALS TO:

President Turgut Özal
Devlet Ba_kanli_i
06100 Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: President Ozal,
Ankara, Turkey
Telexes: 42875 bbk tr
Faxes: +90 4 168 5012
(via Press Office)

Diyarbakir, Turkey
Telegrams: Diyarbakir Valisi,
Diyarbakir, Turkey
Telexes: 72110 OHVT TR;
72084 DYVA TR
("please forward to the Governor")
72090 JASY TR
Faxes: +90 831 26174

Emergency Legislation Governor:
Mr Hayri Kozakçio_lu
Ola_anüstü Hal Valisi

Diyarbakir Chief of Police:
Mr Ramazan Er
Diyarbakir Emniyet Müdürü

Diyarbakir, Turkey
Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru,
Diyarbakir, Turkey
Faxes: +90 831 11956

Minister of the Interior:
Mr Abdülkadir Aksu
Içi_leri Bakanlı_i
06644 Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: Interior Minister Aksu,
Ankara, Turkey
Telexes: 46369 IC SL TR
Faxes: +90 41 28 43 46

President of Parliamentary Human
Rights Commission:
Mr Eyüp A_ik
Insan Haklari Ara_tirma Komisyonu
Ba_kani
TBMM
Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: IHA Komisyonu, TBMM,
Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: +90 4 42 06 941

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 19 June 1991.