

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

15 July 1991

TURKEY:

Sevgi Erdo_an (f)
Cavidan Kocaacar (f)
and 54 unnamed others

On Sunday night, 14 July 1991, the police raided the premises of Özgür-Der (Association of Rights and Freedoms) in Istanbul and detained 56 people, including the two women named above. They are held at the First [Political] Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters and it is feared that they are being interrogated under torture.

Sevgi Erdo_an is the wife of Ibrahim Erdo_an, who was one of eight people killed in Istanbul on Friday night, 12 July 1991, in a police operation against suspected members of the illegal organization Dev Sol. Cavidan Kocaacar was previously detained in February 1991 for 24 days and on 13 June 1991 for 15 days. On both occasions she alleged after release that she had been severely tortured (see UA 209/91 of 14 June 1991, EUR 44/81/91, and follow-ups of 17 June, EUR 44/82/91, and 5 July, EUR 44/91/91). The detentions appear to be part of a continuing police operation which began after the killing of two generals in Ankara and Adana in May 1991, for which Dev Sol claimed responsibility.

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 the southeast and east.

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 Sevgi Erdo_an, Cavidan Kocaacar and their 54 fellow-detainees 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:

Istanbul Chief of Police:

Mr Mehmet A_ar

(Salutation: Dear Sir)

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü

Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey

Telexes: 30811 IEHM TR; 30812 EMMH TR; 26177 IEMT TR

Faxes: +90 1 172 81 82

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz

(Salutation: Your Excellency)

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanlik

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Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey

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Faxes: +90 41 17 04 76 PRIME MINISTER

+90 42 30 88 96 (attn: Prime Minister)

Minister of the Interior:

Mr Mustafa Kalemli

(Salutation: Your Excellency)

Içi_leri Bakanli_i

06644 Ankara, Turkey

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Minister of Justice:

Mr _akir _eker

(Salutation: Your Excellency)

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COPIES TO:

President of Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Eyüp A_ik

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and 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 26 August 1991.