

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

21 September 1990

TURKEY: Ahmet Avc_l)
 Abdullah Ak_n)
 Muhsil Ba_r_yan_k) from Erkent village
 Cihangir Cengiz, aged 70)
 Isa Bilek, aged 66)
 M. S_tk_Cengiz)
 Be_ir Akyüz)

 Ramazan Ekinici, headman)
 Alaattin Y_ld_z)
 Mahmut Y_ld_z)
 Necmettin K_l_çarslan, imam)
 Ömer Aslan)
 Halil Ekinici)
 Ahmet Erter)
 Kas_m Keskin) from Çizmeli village
 Abdullah Güne_)
 Abdulasanet Güne_)
 Nevzat Acar)
 Yahsin Y_ld_z)
 Abit Y_ld_z)
 Ihsan Aksu)

Amnesty International has learned that scores of villagers in the Pervari/Siirt region in the southeast of Turkey have been detained, during operations by the security forces which began around 4 September and are still continuing. The villagers are suspected of providing food and shelter to Kurdish guerrillas fighting in the area.

In the village of Erkent near Pervari almost the entire male population was initially taken into custody around 9 September, but later released. However, Ahmet Avc_l and six other villagers named above remain in incommunicado detention.

They were first held at Doganca police station, but have meanwhile been moved to the Gendarmerie Headquarters in Pervari.

In Çizmeli (formerly Nivela) village in the Eruh area, the village headman, Ramazan Ekinici, was detained two days ago, while Alaattin Y_ldiz and nine others from the same village have been held since around 9 September, and Yahsin Y_ld_z and two others since around 4 September. They were all taken to the Regimental Gendarmerie Headquarters in Siirt where they are being held in incommunicado detention. Nine so-called village protectors - villagers armed and paid by the government to fight Kurdish guerrillas - were released after some two weeks in detention.

It is feared that the detainees are being tortured during interrogation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority estimated to be some 10 million people, which is not officially recognized by the authorities. 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 2000 lives so far have been lost in the continuing fighting. A state of emergency is in force in Siirt and nine other eastern provinces.

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.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/telegrams/express and airmail letters:

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

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister
Yildirim Akbulut
Office of the Prime Minister
Basbakanlik
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 BBMT TR; 42099 BASB TR; 42875 BBK TR
Faxes: 90 41 17 04 76 PRIME MINISTER

Atilla Koç
Siirt Valisi
Governor of Siirt Province
Siirt, Turkey

Telegrams: Siirt Valisi, Siirt, 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 20 October 1990.