

EXTRA 27/97

Fear of torture

27 February 1997

TURKEYCuma Meral, held under the name of Hasan Hasgül
Hasan Ozan, held under the name of Ali Berko_lu
Erdo_an Ber, held under the name of Kamber Göl
Ar_f Celebi
Süleyman Yeter
Mükkade_ Çelik (f)
Zabit Iltemur
Birsen Kaya (f)
Necati Abay
Abidin Ezgin
Ismail Ezgin
Sedat_ eno_lu
Enver Akça
Ay_e Erdo_an (f)
Deniz Erdo_an, son of Ay_e Erdo_an
Do_an Erdo_an, husband of Ay_e Erdo_an
Mustafa Öztürk
Sultan Seçik (f)
Asiye Zeybek (f)
Gönül Karagöz (f)
Bayram Namaz

Some 26 people, including those named above, were detained during police operations in Istanbul during the night of 22 February 1997. They are being held incommunicado at the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters in Aksaray. Although lawyers have power of attorney for some of the detainees they are not allowed to see them in detention. The prosecutor's office has given the police permission to hold the detainees until 7 March. It is feared that they are being interrogated under torture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

People suspected of offences under the Anti-Terror Law can be held in police custody without access to family, friends or legal counsel for up to 30 days in the nine provinces currently under State of Emergency, and for 15 days in the rest of Turkey.

When not being interrogated, detainees are held in cramped, airless and insanitary conditions. With no access to the outside world they are at the mercy of their interrogators. Torture is often applied to extract confessions, to elicit information about illegal organizations, to intimidate detainees into becoming police informers or as informal punishment for presumed support of illegal organizations. Torture methods include being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, hanging by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

Procedures laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for the prompt and proper registration of detainees, and for notification to their families, are almost universally ignored. Lack of prompt registration and notification is extremely distressing for the families of detainees, and creates the conditions in which "disappearances" and torture can occur.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of 26 people (name some or all if possible) detained on 22 February 1997 and held incommunicado at the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters in Aksaray;
- seeking assurances that they are not being subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- appealing that lawyers holding power of attorney be given immediate access to their clients;
- urging that the detainees be promptly brought before a judge to be charged or released;
- requesting to be informed of any charges brought against them.

APPEALS TO:

1. Chief Prosecutor at Istanbul State Security Court:

Mr Erdal Güven

DGM Ba_savc_s_

Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemesi

Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: DGM Ba_savc_s_, _stanbul, Turkey

Telex: 0607 30187 eist tr; 0607 30188 iemd tr

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

2. Istanbul Chief of Police:

Mr Ramazan Er

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü

_stanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey

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

Salutation: Dear Sir

3. Minister of the Interior:

Mrs Meral Ak_ener

İçişleri Bakanl_

Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 2390

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Lütfü Esengün

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476

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 8 March 1997.