

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 44/14/93

Distr: UA/SC

EXTRA 18/93

Fear of Torture

24 February 1993

TURKEY: Abdullah Av_ar

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Abdullah Av_ar who was detained on 20 February 1993 and is being held in incommunicado police detention in Izmir. The organization fears that he is being interrogated under torture.

On the evening of 20 February 1993, Abdullah Av_ar was with three other people at the bus terminal in Izmir, when he was detained by officers of the Anti-Terror Branch of Izmir Police Headquarters.

Under the recently introduced changes to the Criminal Procedure Law, lawyers are now permitted to see their clients in detention except when they are being held for alleged political offences which are tried in State Security Courts. When Abdullah Av_ar's lawyer applied for permission to see him at Izmir Police Headquarters, he first was told that Abdullah Av_ar was to be transferred to the State Security Court in Diyarbak_r. Later, when he learned that his client was still held at Izmir Police Headquarters, he was refused permission to see him.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Abdullah Av_ar's elder brother is the representative in Europe of the Kurdish owned newspaper Özgür Gündem which had to suspend publication in January 1993.

Publication was suspended because five of its reporters in the southeast and a distributor were killed in mysterious circumstances in 1992, and repeated death threats and attacks have been made on its distribution network which has collapsed as a consequence.

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. 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. New legislation to shorten the maximum detention period came into force on 1 December 1992. Now the normal maximum period of 24 hours, for which a non-political detainee may be held before being formally charged or released, may be extended to eight days in cases of ordinary crimes involving three or more suspects. Detainees held on suspicion of political offences to be tried in State Security Courts may be held without charge for 15 days. This period may be extended to 30 days in provinces under emergency legislation or martial law. Emergency legislation is currently in force in Diyarbak_r province, but not in Izmir.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Abdullah Av_ar who was detained in Izmir on 20 February 1993 and is being held incommunicado at the Anti-Terror Branch of Izmir Police Headquarters;
- urging that he is not subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment and that he is granted access to his lawyer and family;

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- asking to be informed of any charges brought against him.

APPEALS TO

1) Chief of Izmir Police:

M. Orhan Ta_anlar
Izmir Emniyet Müdürlü_ü
Izmir, Turkey

Telegrams: Izmir Emniyet Muduru, Izmir, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Minister of the Interior:

Mr _smet Sezgin
_çi_leri Bakanl____
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Telexes: 46369 IC SL TR

Faxes: + 90 4 418 1795

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

President of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Sabri Yavuz
nsan Haklar Ara_t_rma Komisyonu Ba_kan_
TBMM
Ankara, Turkey

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 6 March 1993.