

Public

amnesty international

TURKEY
Appeal Cases



6 March 2002
AI Index: EUR 44/017/2002
Distr: SC/CC/CO/PO

INTERNATIONAL SECRETARIAT, 1 EASTON STREET, LONDON WC1X 0DW, UNITED KINGDOM

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

TURKEY: APPEAL CASES

6 March 2002; AI Index: EUR 44/017/2002; public

Turkey: students reportedly tortured for submitting petitions

Students Mürsel Sargut and Y.P. were detained and reportedly tortured by police officers to make them "confess" to being members of an illegal organization.

19-year-old literature student Mürsel Sargut was detained by police officers on 30 November 2001 while leaving Istanbul University. He was initially brought to the local police station in Beyazit but was transferred four hours later to the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters.

Mürsel Sargut was brought to the upper floor of the building where he was urged to "confess" to membership of the illegal armed opposition group Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and of having helped organize a campaign by university students to request Kurdish language classes [see background below]. When he refused, police officers reportedly beat and slapped him.

Later in the day, after having been taken to hospital for a medical inspection, he was brought back to detention at the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters. There he was reportedly exposed to torture and ill-treatment by three or four police officers. He was reportedly blindfolded with a scarf, stripped naked and had his sexual organs squeezed. He was also said to have been sworn at; beaten; threatened with death; sprayed with pressurized water and left near a ventilator; and raped with a truncheon.

Mürsel Sargut was again reportedly subjected to torture and ill-treatment the following evening. He was said to have been blindfolded and brought to a toilet where he was stripped naked and was made to lie on the floor. He was sprayed with cold water and his testicles were squeezed. He was then made to stand up again and was beaten.

On 3 November 2001, Mürsel Sargut was remanded to Bayrampa_a Prison by a State Security Court. The Anti-Terror police officers who brought him to the prison reportedly beat him and told the soldiers at the prison that they "had not been able to get him to confess" and that they should therefore "treat him accordingly". He was as result then stripped naked and beaten at the main gate of the prison.

Law student Y.P. (full name known to Amnesty International) was arrested on 25 December 2001 as she returned to her student dormitory in Istanbul. Two or three plainclothes police officers reportedly covered her eyes with their hands and forced her into a car which brought her to the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters. She was taken to the upper floor where police officers urged her to "confess" to membership of the youth wing of the PKK. When she refused, she was reportedly beaten and sworn at. She was reportedly blindfolded throughout her interrogation. Whenever she denied her interrogators' allegations she reportedly had her hair pulled and was punched in the face.

Y.P. was apparently partially stripped naked. Later, an individual whom the police officers addressed as "Commander" allegedly ordered the police officers to take her downstairs, strip her naked and do whatever they wanted "to bring her to senses". She was reportedly exposed to sexual harassment and threatened with sexual torture over the following nights until she was finally remanded to Bak_rköy Prison on 28 December 2001.

Both Mürsel Sargut and Y.P. are reported to be suffering psychological problems as a result of the alleged torture at Istanbul Police Headquarters. On 21 March 2002, a trial will start at the Istanbul State Security Court in which they and other students are accused of having submitted applications for Kurdish classes. Some of the defendants are charged with membership of the PKK, while others are charged with aiding and abetting the PKK.

Background Information:

Since November 2001, hundreds of people have been arrested after students began campaigning by submitting petitions to their universities asking for courses in the Kurdish language. Parents too have filed petitions to the Ministry of National Education asking for mother-tongue classes at school. Although the constitution guarantees the right of petition, many have been arrested. Some have reportedly been tortured or ill-treated while in detention or been expelled from their places of study.

Recommended action:

Please send politely worded letters in English or your own language:

- ★ expressing concern at allegations that Mürsel Sargut and Y.P. were tortured and ill-treated by police officers while in detention at the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters;
- ★ calling for a thorough, impartial and independent investigation into the allegations of torture by police officers and of insufficient medical examinations with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice. Any police or gendarmerie officer accused of torture and ill-treatment should be suspended from duty while they are under investigation, and should be dismissed if convicted;
- ★ asking for Mürsel Sargut and Y.P. to be compensated for any psychological or physical damage resulting from the alleged torture, and urging that they are provided with appropriate treatment and rehabilitation;
- ★ asking that the Turkish authorities take immediate steps to promote accountability by police and gendarmerie to end torture including ending the practice of blindfolding in police custody. Blindfolding is a form of ill-treatment, and makes the reliable identification of officers responsible for abuses more difficult;
- ★ reminding the authorities of their obligations as a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights which states that "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".

Whom to write:

Minister of Justice Prof Hikmet Sami Türk Ministry of Justice Adalet Bakanl____ 06659 Ankara, Turkey 90 312 417 3954 Salutation: Dear Minister	Minister of the Interior: Mr Rü_tü Kaz_m Yücelen, Ministry of Interior, _çi_leri Bakanl____, 06644 Ankara, Turkey Fax: +90 312 418 17 95 Salutation: Dear Minister	State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights Mr Nejat Arseven, Office of the Prime Minister, Ba_bakanl_k, 06573 Ankara, Turkey Fax: + 90 312 417 0476 Salutation: Dear Minister
---	--	--

Send copies of your letters to the diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.