

PUBLIC

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19 May 2004

UA 177/04 Ill-treatment/fear for safety

TURKEY B.P. (f), aged 12
Members of her family

Twelve-year-old B.P. and members of her family have reportedly been receiving threats since she lodged a complaint that she had been severely beaten by police officers in Diyarbakir, southeast Turkey. Amnesty International is seriously concerned for their safety.

B.P. was reportedly abducted from the street in Diyarbakir on 19 February 2004 by people carrying walkie-talkies, who blindfolded her and took her away in a car. They asked her where her sister was, and when she did not reply they reportedly punched her repeatedly in her mouth and knees, so that her mouth began to bleed heavily. She was then reportedly taken to a place which is believed to be the Anti-Terror Branch of Police Headquarters in Diyarbakir where she was given treatment for her mouth but then beaten again and threatened. She was released later that day.

When B.P. applied to the local branch of the Human Rights Association (*Insan Haklari Dernegi*, IHD) she was unable to speak and had to write her complaint. Medical reports confirm these injuries. After the IHD lodged a complaint on her behalf about the incident with the State Prosecutor, B.P. and her family, who were staying outside Diyarbakir city, received five or six phone calls from people who falsely identified themselves as IHD members, asking them to come to Diyarbakir. On 19 May, B.P. and her mother visited the office of the IHD to seek advice.

The IHD sent a fax notifying Amnesty International about its concerns for the safety of B.P. and her family. Shortly after they sent this fax, B.P. reportedly received an anonymous call saying "Why did you apply to Amnesty International? It will be very bad for you now."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have been several recent legal reforms in Turkey which, if properly applied, could be important measures against torture and impunity. Among these are changes in detention procedures, which include a reduction in the length of time detainees can be held without charge and which uphold the right of *all* detainees to have immediate access to legal counsel.

Nevertheless, Amnesty International is still receiving numerous complaints of torture and ill-treatment in police and gendarmerie stations as well as allegations that these new regulations are not being respected. A worrying practice, demonstrating the way in which some law enforcement officers are ready to bypass new regulations that may prevent torture or ill-treatment, is that of unrecorded detention, whereby the abducted person is not registered as being in detention and is generally taken not to a police station but to another place, or is driven around in a marked or unmarked police car.

Amnesty International has also received reports of individuals, and even their families, who have lodged complaints that they have been tortured or ill-treatment by police officers, have been threatened or beaten to force them to withdraw their complaints.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the reported abduction and ill-treatment of B.P.;

- calling for immediate steps be taken to guarantee the safety of her and her family, in accordance with their wishes;
- urging the authorities to conduct a full and impartial investigation into the threats, for the results to be made public and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- expressing concern that the threats appear to be related to a complaint made by B.P. about police ill-treatment;
- reminding the authorities that they ratified the UN Convention against Torture in 1988, and are obliged to bring alleged torturers to justice (Articles 4 and 5), and to protect victims, plaintiffs and witnesses in torture trials (Article 13).

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Mr Abdulkadir Aksu

Ministry of Interior

İçişleri Bakanlığı

06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegram: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 418 17 95

Salutation: Dear Minister

Diyarbakir Chief of Police:

Mr Orhan Okur

Diyarbakir Emniyet Müdürü

Diyarbakir, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Müdürü, Diyarbakir, Turkey

Fax: + 90 412 232 3206

Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

Governor of Diyarbakir

Mr Nusret Miroglu

Diyarbakir Valisi

Diyarbakir, Turkey

Telegrams: Diyarbakir Vali, Diyarbakir, Turkey

Fax: +90 412 222 2288

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights and Foreign Minister

Mr Abdullah Gul

Office of the Prime Minister,

Basbakanlik,

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 417 04 76

Salutation: Dear Minister

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 30 June 2004.