

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: EUR 44/21/92

Distr: CO/GR

Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

TURKEY: @Returned Political Exile Alleges Torture in Ankara

On 3 January 1992, Haydar Beltan was detained in Ankara on arrival at Esenbo_a Airport. He had returned for a visit from abroad where he had lived as a political exile since August 1980.

Haydar Beltan, aged 31, is a Kurd from the province of Tunceli. He left Turkey in 1979 and applied for political asylum abroad after the military coup of September 1980. This was first granted in France, from where he later moved to Germany to join his wife. He was for nearly three years editor of the monthly literary magazine Tohum (Seed) and became a board member of the Turkish Teachers' Association based in Cologne.

Encouraged by pronouncements from the newly elected Turkish Government which envisaged positive steps to improve the human rights situation in Turkey and in particular to curb the practice of torture, Haydar Beltan obtained the necessary travel permit from the Turkish Consulate General in Paris and flew to Ankara on 3 January. There he was awaited by the member of parliament Kamer Genç who had come to welcome him and by officers of the Anti-Terror Branch [new name for Political Branch] of Ankara Police Headquarters who immediately detained him. For six days, he was interrogated, allegedly under torture, and finally signed a confession. In a letter he described what happened as follows:

"As soon as I entered the Anti-Terror Branch my eyes were blindfolded. Their first question was "How many times have you entered Turkey, what did you do in the mountains?". It was no use explaining that I had spent the last 12 years in Germany. They took off the blindfold and showed me pictures of people I did not know. I was also shown a picture of myself, the one I gave to the police when I applied for a passport, with the name IBO under it, and they said this was my codename. I denied this and said it was a lie."

He was then taken to a cell, where he was blindfolded again. He was taken out at various times over three days and the questions were repeated by various interrogation teams all of whom said they had come from Tunceli. The interrogations got progressively harsher. "They started to punch me in the stomach, grabbing and pulling my hair, threatening me. But I continued to tell the truth at this point. They gave me a pen and paper and told me to write a statement. I wrote nine pages telling my life story, how I had left Turkey and never returned. They did not accept the statement. They asked me: 'Do you know Toraman [a detainee who has "disappeared"

without trace in police custody in Istanbul since October 1991]?' I said I did not. They said 'You know him - think a bit. You will remember. You must have read the papers. The person we lost?' Then I did remember him. 'That will be your fate' they said.

"I said 'There is democracy in Turkey. The prime minister said that all Turkish citizens can walk with head held high.' They leapt on me, saying 'We are the state - fuck the prime minister. We'll get rid of you tonight, and let's see what the prime minister can do to save you then.' They threw me to the ground and kicked me.

"I was left, seemingly alone, in the room for a few minutes, then a crowd came in. They took me up some stairs and then down a little way, this way and that. The threats did not cease. They were punching me in various parts of my body, and took me to a cold room where there was a loud sound of water. The sound of metal, water, the threats, shouts and laughter of the interrogators created a horrifying atmosphere. They asked the same questions."

They took off his clothes. "There's no escape from us now. Nobody can find you." After three to five minutes he started to shiver. "Everything ready?".

There was laughter and the sound of water. Finally someone shouted "Drill him". Laughter and various sounds. One of them grabbed his head and dragged him to the ground. One person stood on his back, the others opened his legs. Eventually someone behind him said, "No, I don't fancy this", suggesting intended rape.

When he continued to deny having used the codenames Ibo and Osman, and denied that he made illegal entries to Turkey in 1983 to carry out guerrilla activities, they said, "He has agreed to accept Toraman's fate". They also threatened to bring his brother. Haydar Beltan feared that they might also bring his wife who had flown to Turkey following his arrest. Eventually, very cold, he decided to agree to all their charges on the basis that he could later prove that he did not enter Turkey during the period in question.

He asked them to tell him what he was supposed to have done and on 9 January prepared a statement to that effect.

On 10 January he was transferred to the eastern province of Tunceli, taken before the prosecutor and a judge and formally arrested on 11 January. He was held in a civilian prison in Tunceli for five days and on 17 January handed over to the authorities in Erzincan where he is now imprisoned awaiting trial on charges of membership of an illegal organization. It appears that the allegations against Haydar Beltan may be based on false incriminating statements given under torture by detainees who knew that he was safe in exile.

Amnesty International is concerned about the alleged torture of Haydar Beltan while in police custody in Ankara. The organization is appealing for a prompt, full and impartial investigation into these allegations and that those responsible are brought to justice.