

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 36/97

Torture / Fear of torture

13 March 1997

TURKEY Hatun Temuzalp (f), journalist
Ali Can Kaya, journalist
Arzu Görmez (f), journalist
Dil_an Acar (f), journalist
Muammer Kalkan, journalist
Tekin Yazar
Ali Ekber
Haydar ... [family name not known]
Hasan Acan

Released detainees have reported that those named above, detained on 7 March 1997, have been tortured in custody, in particular Hasan Acan. They remain incommunicado, presumably at the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters.

In a police operation on 7 March in the Alibeyköy district of Istanbul the journalists Hatun Temuzalp, Ali Can Kaya, Arzu Görmez, Dil_an Acar, and Muammer Kalkan of *Proleter Halk_n Birli_i* (Proletarian People's Union), a fortnightly socialist newspaper, were detained. Three other people who work for the same newspaper, Tekin Yazar, Ali Ekber and Haydar (family name unknown), were detained at their homes in the Gülsuyu district. In the Yenibosna district of Istanbul, Hasan Acan, a subscriber to the newspaper, was taken into detention.

The detentions have now been acknowledged, although families of the detainees were initially unaware that their relatives had been taken into custody. The Prosecutor's Office has given the police permission to hold the detainees until 18 March when they are to be taken to court to be charged or released.

The police operation appears to be in connection with the second anniversary of the killing by police of at least 17 people in the Gaziosmanpa_a district of Istanbul during a week of unrest in March 1995 (see below). A large protest demonstration was apparently anticipated by the authorities this year, as in the previous year when some 15,000 people marched.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 12 March 1995 unknown armed men attacked a coffee house in the Gaziosmanpa_a district of Istanbul, an Alevi neighbourhood, killing one person and wounding 10. Police allegedly watched, but did not intervene. According to one newspaper account, the taxi which the attackers used was later found outside the neighbourhood with the driver murdered. Unrest began and barricades were erected when a large crowd gathered and began to march towards the police station in protest at alleged police collaboration with the killers. During the week-long disturbances which erupted in Istanbul, and later spread to other districts and Ankara, at least 17 people were killed and scores wounded by the police opening fire into the crowd. Twenty police officers are standing trial, but proceedings have been delayed and resumed only at the beginning of March 1997.

The Alevi are a Muslim religious minority estimated to number between 10 and 15 million in Turkey and are known for their liberal and secular tendencies. They maintain that they are being discriminated against by the Sunni majority.

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

- expressing concern about the alleged torture of Hasan Acan and fellow detainees taken into custody in Istanbul on 7 March 1997;
- calling for immediate steps to be taken to ensure that they are protected from torture and ill-treatment;
- asking that they be promptly brought before a judge to be charged or released.

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

İçisleri 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 20 March 1997.