

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 44/021/2002

28 March 2002

Further information on UA 88/02 (EUR 44/019/2002, 22 March 2002) - Risk of torture and ill-treatment/ police brutality

TURKEY311 Kurds detained in Istanbul and Mersin

killed: Mehmet _en (m), aged 34
Ömer Ayd_n (m), aged 39

New names: Saadet Erdem (m), Human rights defender
Songül Kaya (f)
Han_m Ate_ (f)

172 of the 234 individuals detained in Mersin, on the eastern Mediterranean coast in connection with banned *Newroz* celebrations have either been remanded to custody or else released. Meanwhile, all of the 81 individuals detained in Istanbul have also been released.

On 25 March, 172 individuals were brought before the State Prosecutor in Mersin. Thirteen of them were released, while 159 were arrested and remanded to prison.

It is alleged, however, that nine of those arrested were juveniles aged between 15 and 18 years old. Sixty-one individuals are being held under observation by police in Mersin State Hospital, while they receive treatment for injuries sustained during clashes with the police. They have had their detentions extended by another four days.

In Mersin, the authorities have reportedly initiated an investigation into the deaths of Ömer Aydın and Mehmet _en, who was a delegate in Mersin for HADEP, the legal pro-Kurdish political party. Both reportedly died after being crushed by police tanks. A young girl called Songül Kaya was wounded after being hit by a police tank. Han_m Ate_ broke her arms and legs after she was reportedly thrown from the second-story roof of a building by police during the clashes between protestors and the police. Police are also reported to have beat and dragged individuals across the ground as they made their arrests. The Minister of the Interior has sent delegates to Mersin to investigate what happened.

In Ankara, Saadet Erdem, a board member of the Human Rights Association (IHD), was hospitalized after he was attacked and beaten around the head with truncheons by police officers. This occurred after he intervened in a dispute between people trying to participate in officially-permitted *Newroz* celebrations and police officers.

According to Government authorities, there were 44 marches throughout Turkey to celebrate *Newroz* - 40 of these were legal while 26 had been banned (as in Mersin and Istanbul). 200,364 joined in festivities while 1,201 people were detained throughout the country over the course of the day.

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

- calling for a full and impartial investigation into the deaths of Mehmet _en and Ömer Aydın and into allegations that police may have used excessive force and ill-treated individuals trying to take part in a peaceful festivities in Mardin, with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;
- expressing concern that human rights defender Saadet Erdem was reportedly attacked by police officers in Ankara and calling for a full and impartial

investigation with the results made public and those responsible brought to justice;

- requesting that the authorities take steps to extend durable protection in law to the IHD and its staff and to allow human rights defenders to pursue unhindered their lawful role of monitoring and reporting human rights matters in line with the UN Declaration on the Protection of Human Rights Defenders;
- calling on the authorities to take effective action to ensure all public servants recognize the legitimacy of the work of human rights defenders.
- urging the authorities to suspend any police or gendarmerie officer accused of torture or ill-treatment from duty while they are under investigation, and to dismiss them if convicted;
- calling for the 61 detainees in hospital in Mersin to be given immediate access to lawyers, brought promptly before a judge and either charged with a recognizably criminal offence or released immediately.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

Mr Rü_tü Kaz_m Yücelen

Ministry of Interior

_çi_leri Bakanl____

06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Fax: + 90 312 418 17 95

Salutation: Dear Minister

General Director of Police

Mr Necati Bilican

Emniyet Genel Müdürlü_ü

Bakanl_klar

Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Genel Muduru, Bakanliklar, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Nejat Arseven

Office of the Prime Minister,

Ba_bakanl_k,

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 9 May 2002.