

UA 30/96

Death threats / Fear for safety

8 February 1996

**TURKEY** Abdurrahman Mü\_tak, headman of Ye\_ilyurt village  
and other villagers from Ye\_ilyurt village

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Amnesty International fears for the safety of Abdurrahman Mü\_tak, who was subjected to death threats while in detention on 6 February 1996. This is the latest in a long-running series of human rights violations suffered by him and members of his family, which Amnesty International believes is connected to their personal petition to the European Commission of Human Rights of the Council of Europe against the Turkish Government (see below).

At about 5am on 6 February 1996, some 100 soldiers surrounded Ye\_ilyurt village, near Cizre, \_irnak province, in southeastern Turkey. The villagers were summoned to gather in front of the school, where they were told to join the village guard system, a civil defence force organized and paid by the government to fight the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party). Villagers of Ye\_ilyurt have repeatedly been harassed and put under pressure to join this militia system.

When Abdurrahman Mü\_tak, Abdullah Gündo\_an, Mehmet Sad\_kkayar and Mahmut Diri refused to agree to become village guards, they were detained and taken to Düzova (Kurdish: Hoser) village. After their release at about 3pm, Abdurrahman Mü\_tak reported that he had received death threats from the chief of the village guards in Düzova. Several days earlier, on 26 January, security forces had come to the village and given Abdurrahman Mü\_tak a two-day deadline to resign as village headman.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Kamil Mü\_tak and Bahattin Mü\_tak (father and brother of Abdurrahman Mü\_tak) were the principal plaintiffs in a personal petition brought against a gendarmerie officer who allegedly forced Bahattin Mü\_tak to feed human excrement to his father and other villagers on 15 January 1989.

In the early hours of 15 January 1989, security forces surrounded Ye\_ilyurt. They made the male members of the village lie face down, whereupon they kicked and beat them, accusing them of giving assistance to the PKK. The officer in charge was convicted of ill-treating the villagers and sentenced to two months' imprisonment, later converted to a fine. However, the villagers had also alleged that the soldiers collected human excrement in a ladle and made Kamil Mü\_tak smear it over the mouths of the male villagers, and in turn made Kamil's son, Bahattin, smear excrement over his father's mouth. In the course of this, Abdurrahman Mü\_tak and Abdullah Gündo\_an were injured. This allegation was suppressed by the local governor's office which is empowered under emergency legislation to halt any investigation into ill-treatment or torture by security forces.

On 14 November 1992, Abdurrahman Mü\_tak and three other witnesses to the January 1989 events were detained in Ye\_ilyurt. They were held in illegal incommunicado police custody in \_\_rnak Police Headquarters for 59 days, during which time they were reportedly ill-treated, before being formally arrested by Diyarbakir State Security Court.

On 12 January 1993 the Human Rights Commission of the Council of Europe deemed the Mü\_tak's petition admissible. On 17 February 1993 nine villagers of Ye\_ilyurt, including Kamil Mü\_tak and Bahattin Mü\_tak, were detained by police

(see EXTRA 19/93, 25 February 1993, EUR 44/15/93). It appears that their detention may have been organized in order to discredit the plaintiffs by extracting incriminating statements, and to make them withdraw their complaint.

Bahattin Mü\_tak was severely tortured and after his release on 5 March 1993 still bore the marks of torture. There were bruises on his thighs, his left foot was bruised under the heel from *falaka* (beating of the soles of the feet).

He also alleged that he was subjected to beatings, had his testicles squeezed, and was suspended by the arms with both arms raised for many hours and was sprayed with water. He alleged that electricity was applied to his right arm, foot, penis, teeth and ear. He said that he was accused of being a traitor to the state and of feeding PKK guerrillas and keeping their weapons. The police demanded that he sign a prepared statement to this effect which he refused (see follow-up to EXTRA 19/93, 16 March 1993, EUR 44/28/93).

In February 1994 Abdurrahman Mü\_tak, Bahattin Mü\_tak, Kamil Mü\_tak and Abdullah Gündo\_an accepted a compensation of 1.2 million French Francs from the Turkish state as part of a friendly settlement.

Ten provinces in southeast Turkey have been under emergency legislation as a result of the conflict between government forces and armed members of the PKK, which has claimed more than 18,000 lives since 1984. Since 1990 hundreds of villages have been burned and their inhabitants forcibly evicted during security raids on settlements which refuse to participate in the village guard militia. Theoretically, membership of the village guards is voluntary, but in effect villagers are caught between two fires. Many are reluctant to serve as village guards for fear of reprisals from the PKK. Those who refuse, however, are subject to reprisals from the security forces or village guards from neighbouring villages who accuse them of actively or passively supporting the PKK.

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

- expressing concern at the reported death threats against Abdurrahman Mü\_tak by village guards, and calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice;
- calling for immediate measures to guarantee the safety of Abdurrahman Mü\_tak, and of all the villagers of Ye\_ilyurt.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) Cizre local Governor

Mr Onan Kocako\_lu

Cizre Kaymakaml\_\_\_\_

Cizre, \_irnak, Turkey

**Telegrams: Cizre Kaymakaml\_\_\_\_, Cizre, \_irnak, Turkey**

**Salutation: Dear Governor**

2) President Süleyman Demirel

Office of the President

Cumhurba\_kanl\_\_\_\_, 06100 Ankara

**Telegrams: Cumhurbaşkanlığı, Ankara, Turkey**

**Telexes: 42303 kosk tr**

**Faxes: +90 312 468 5026**

**Salutation: Dear President**

3) Interior Minister:

Mr Teoman Ünüsan  
Ministry of Interior  
\_çi\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_\_  
06644 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Icisleri Bakanligi, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: +90 312 418 1795**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Adnan Ekmen, Office of the Prime Minister

Ba\_bakanl\_k, 06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Faxes: +90 312 417 0476; +90 312 420 5394**

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 10 January 1996.