

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

4 March 1991

TURKEY: Kiyasettin Celik, manager of local coffee shop  
Kadir Celik, brother of the above  
Mehmet Bulut  
Burhanettin Bulut, brother of the above, aged above 40  
Rafat Bulut )  
Nurettin Bulut ) not related to Bulut brothers, above  
Mehmet Bulut )  
Hüsamettin Yüksel  
Mehmet Ersöz, aged 15  
and some seven unnamed others

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On 22 February 1991 some 13 young men aged between 14 and 25, including those named above, were reportedly rounded up in Köprüba\_\_ village, 10 km away from Bingöl. They were then taken to Bingöl where they are being held incommunicado at Bingöl Gendarmerie Headquarters, except Mehmet Ersöz, who is said to have been committed to Bingöl prison on unknown charges. Two further men were detained later and also taken to Bingöl. No legal counsel has yet been appointed. The families are too afraid to intervene on their behalf. The detainees are reported as being subjected to torture and some as being unable to walk.

According to reports received, a military official closed the village coffee shop some time ago, but it was later allowed to reopen after petitioning by the villagers. However, one week after it reopened a hand grenade was thrown into the coffee shop at night. Four days previously the owner had been detained and allegedly tortured, but was released. Following the explosion the young men in the village were taken into police custody.

Bingöl province is under a State of Emergency and the maximum detention period is 30 days.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority which is not officially recognized by the authorities, but is estimated to number some 10 million people. The Kurdish population lives mainly in southeastern Turkey. Frequent allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been received from the region and the number of torture allegations increased substantially after the 1980 military coup. Since August 1984, when Kurdish guerrillas - members of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) - started armed attacks, an alarming number of reports of ill-treatment of detainees by the security forces have come from the eastern and southeastern provinces, where more than 2000 lives so far have been lost in the continuing fighting.

In May 1990 the Turkish government issued Decrees 424 and 425 (in December replaced by Decree 430), further extending the already extraordinary powers of the Emergency Legislation Governor. Subsequently, in August 1990, the government derogated from Articles 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights, all of which contain important safeguards for human rights.

Turkey ratified the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture on 25 February 1988 and the UN Convention Against Torture on 2 August 1988. However, all information available to Amnesty International indicates that torture is still widespread and systematic in Turkey. Allegations of torture have continued since the transfer of power to a civilian government in 1983. Most allegations relate to ill-treatment of detainees in police custody during their initial interrogation when they are usually denied access to relatives or a lawyer. Under current legislation the maximum detention period before being formally charged or released is 24 hours; in cases involving three or more suspects or due to the 'nature of the crime' it may be extended to 15 days. This period may be extended to 30 days in areas under emergency legislation or martial law. Emergency legislation is currently in force in ten provinces, including Bingöl.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- urging that all detainees from Köprüba\_\_ village held in Bingöl, including those named above, are given prompt access to their families and lawyers and that they are not ill-treated while in detention;
- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

**APPEALS TO:**

Regimental Gendarmerie Commander:  
Jandarma Alay Komutani  
Jandarma Alay Komutanl\_\_\_\_  
Bingöl, Turkey

**Telegrams: Jandarma Alay Komutanligi, Bingol, Turkey**  
**Telexes: 72217 JBIN TR**

President Turgut Özal  
Office of the President  
Devlet Baskanligi  
06100 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: President Özal, Ankara, Turkey**  
**Telexes: 42875 BBK TR**  
**Faxes: (via Press Office) + 90 4 168 5012**

**COPIES TO:** Diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 April 1991.