

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 27/92

Fear of Torture

13 March 1992

TURKEY:

Cengiz AKKURT, lycee student in Kurtalan

Bedri ASLAN, villager from Beykent village

Recep KARAC, aged 45-50, teacher in Be_yol village

Abdullah DEMIR, imam of Gökçeba_ village
and several unnamed others

On 9 March 1992, Cengiz Akkurt, a lycee student from Kurtalan was detained by officers of the political police. Bedri Aslan, a villager from Beykent was detained on the same day by members of the Special Team force (nominally responsible to the local police commander and trained for close combat with guerrilla forces) and the village teacher Recep Karaç from Be_yol village was also taken into custody.

On 11 March, Abdullah Demir, the imam (Muslim prayer leader) of Gökçeba_ village (Kurdish name Cuanika), and a number of other people travelling in several vehicles, were detained at a road block by gendarmerie and police officers in plainclothes.

They are all being held incommunicado at the Provincial Gendarmerie Headquarters in Siirt on suspicion of aiding the guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and it is feared that they are being tortured while under interrogation. They may be held for up to 30 days before being charged or released.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority which is estimated to number some 10 million people, living mainly in southeastern Turkey. Frequent allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been received from the region. Since August 1984, when guerrillas 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. Some 3,000 lives have so far been lost on both sides and among the civilian population in the continuing fighting. Emergency legislation is in force in 10 provinces in the region and the Emergency Legislation Governor in Diyarbakir has extraordinary powers over three additional provinces. In May 1990 the Turkish Government issued Decrees 424 and 425 (in December 1991 replaced by Decree 430), further extending the powers of the Emergency Legislation Governor.

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. 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. 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. Under current legislation the maximum period a detainee may be held 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 10 provinces, including Siirt province.

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

- appealing that the detainees named above may be allowed to see their families and lawyers and that they are not subjected to any ill-treatment while being held;

- asking to be informed of the reason for their detention, whether they have been charged and if so what the charges are.

APPEALS TO

1) Chief of Siirt Police:

Mr Celalettin Cerrah
Siirt Emniyet Müdürü
Siirt, Turkey

Dear Sir

Telegrams: Siirt Emniyet Mudurlugu, Siirt, Turkey

2) Siirt Gendarmerie Commander:

1 Alay Jandarma Komutan
_1 Alay Jandarma Komutanl____
Siirt, Turkey

Dear Commander

Telegrams: İl Alay Jandarma Komutanligi, Siirt, Turkey

Telexes: 72216 jsir tr

3) Emergency Legislation Governor:

Mr Ünal Erkan
Ola_anüstü Hal Valisi
Diyarbak_r, Turkey

Dear Governor

Telegrams: Olaganustu Hal Valisi, Diyarbakir, Turkey

Telexes: 72110 OHVT TR; 72084 DYVA TR (mark please forward to the Governor) and 72090 JASY TR

Faxes: + 90 831 26174 (the telephone will be answered and you will need to ask for the fax "sinyal")

4) Minister of the Interior:

Mr _smet Sezgin
_çi_leri Bakanl____
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Dear Minister

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Telexes: 46369 IC SL TR

Faxes: + 90 4 118 1795

COPIES TO:

President of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Ahmet Türk

nsan Haklar Ara_t_rma Komisyonu Ba_kan_
TBMM
Ankara, Turkey

and 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 1992.