

EXTERNAL

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Further information on EXTRA 53/97 (EUR 44/29/97, 18 April 1997) - Prisoner of Conscience

TURKEY \_anar Yurdatapan, musician, human rights activist

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\_anar Yurdatapan was arrested by Istanbul State Security Court prosecutor late on the evening of 22 April. He was able to exchange brief words with his lawyer, Eren Keskin, but was not permitted to speak to his family. He is currently held in Metris Prison in Istanbul.

Although the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and the UN Special Rapporteur have both recommended that incommunicado detention be abolished, the new detention procedures enacted by Turkey in March 1997 provide for four days' incommunicado detention. \_anar Yurdatapan was held incommunicado for nearly six days - almost 48 hours in excess of this limit.

In the past few days the Turkish press has attributed to him a variety of offences ranging from drug smuggling and money-laundering to possession of weapons. These allegations proved to be unfounded, but Amnesty International experienced considerable difficulty in establishing the grounds for \_anar Yurdatapan's arrest. The organization contacted Istanbul Police Headquarters on 17 April but was not permitted to talk to the prisoner and was denied information concerning the accusation against him. Finally, on 20 April, Istanbul Police Headquarters made an official statement that \_anar Yurdatapan had been detained in possession of two false passports bearing the photographs of members of the PKK.

In fact Murat Demir and Murat Ipek were former members of the PKK, captured in the early 1990s, who had given state's evidence in return for reduced sentences. After serving their sentences, the two men had apparently become agents for the Turkish security forces. Later, they contacted \_anar Yurdatapan in order to give information about acts, including political murder, that they had carried out on behalf of the state in the intervening years. \_anar Yurdatapan conducted a long video interview with the two men. Several private television networks conducted their own interviews which were broadcast during February and March.

At the time they were interviewed, the two men were not wanted by the authorities, but they felt that they would be at severe risk if they were to fall into the hands of the security forces after giving such revealing interviews. It is known that they had expressed the wish to go abroad, even if this meant standing trial for the acts that they claimed that they had committed while working for the state.

However, Murat Ipek and Murat Demir were detained at the same time as \_anar Yurdatapan. Also appearing before the State Security Court on 22 April was a police commissioner whom Murat Demir and Murat Ipek had claimed had collaborated with them in extorting money with menaces. When his house was searched, police found Kalashnikov and Scorpion automatic weapons, apparently unlicensed, together with ammunition and a grenade. The court released the commissioner to face trial later, but ordered the arrest of \_anar Yurdatapan, Murat Demir and Murat Ipek.

*\_anar Yurdatapan is currently held in Metris Prison in Istanbul. His statement to the press of 22 April was as follows: It is true that I protected Murat Demir and Murat Ipek. Everybody must have heard what they told me. I recorded their statements on video and did what I could to make sure they were circulated as widely as possible, including to the Susurluk Commission [the Turkish parliamentary commission investigating the "Susurluk incident" of 4 November 1996 when a road accident revealed that a police chief, a member of parliament and feudal chieftain at the head of a troop of village guards were discovered to be travelling together with Abdullah Çatl\_, a member of a far right-wing organization wanted internationally for drug smuggling and multiple political murder in a car loaded with weaponry, including silencers.] I believe the testimony of these two people was very important and for this reason I tried to prevent them from being silenced. In view of the fact that photographs of these two people in the uniforms of their special military unit have been published, as well as private photographs of them together with Colonel Obuz [Colonel Aslan Obuz - a member of the security forces with whom they allege they carried out undercover work for the state], perhaps the state should thank me for protecting these people to whom they had given special duties!?*

*It is not true that I had passports prepared for them. It is true that I brought their own passports which - somehow - were still in Germany. I was not particularly surprised when I saw that although photographs were theirs, the names were wrong. How many identity cards has Ye\_il [codename for a member of the secret security forces believed to have organized extrajudicial executions] got, and Ibrahim Çatl\_ [presumably a literal error, meaning Abdullah Çatl\_ (see above) who had a privileged passport under an alias, signed by the Interior Minister] had identities made out under how many names and all supplied by the state? I said to myself "This is the state, it has its own ways of working" and did not even imagine that the passports were false.*

*The heart of the matter is this: it must be established how much of what these two men said was true and how much was exaggeration. And in order for this to happen, everyone should hear what they have to say. We should not be diverted from this aim. Even Mehmet A\_ar [the Interior Minister] said: "they are exaggerating but it is true." Now, civil society should develop a new "Susurluk monitoring group". Let's make sure that the truth is not covered up.*

No further appeals by the UA Network are necessary at this stage. Thanks to all those who participated in the action. Further information on \_anar Yurdatapan's case will be forwarded to the network as it emerges.