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Fear of Torture

8 March 1991

TURKEY: Mehmet Akkan, seasonal migrant, IHD member  
\_ükrü Tunç  
Kas\_m Ekinci, seasonal migrant, IHD member, HEP board  
Salih Ekinci member  
Bengin Özal  
Münir Sevim  
Emin A\_kara  
Salih kayhan  
Mücahit\_lter  
Ahmet Ba\_yicit  
Selahattin ...  
Emin ...  
\_ükrü Kaya  
Bilal Kaya, brother of \_ükrü  
Sad\_k Kaya, brother of \_ükrü  
Celal Süzer  
Hasan Süzer, brother of Celal  
Abdullah Talatkulu

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There have been widespread detentions in Siirt in the southeast during the past few days. The usual approach by the police has been to set up a "police station" in somebody's house early in the morning and then to arrest anyone who came to the door.

This happened on 7 March to Mehmet Akkan, a member of the Turkish Human Rights Association (IHD) and a seasonal migrant, who spends the summer with his herds in the mountains and the winter in Siirt. Five police officers occupied his house all day, not even allowing the children to go to the toilet or drink water. In the evening Mehmet Akkan was taken to Siirt Police Headquarters, where he is reported to be held incommunicado.

The house of \_ükrü Tunç was likewise occupied by the police and in the evening he was also detained and taken to Siirt Police Headquarters.

Kasim Ekinci, also a seasonal migrant and IHD member, as well as a board member of the People's Labour Party (HEP) in Siirt, was similarly detained in the evening of 7 March.

Before \_ükrü Kaya was detained, his wife Emine with their three-day-old baby and relative Çiçek Kaya were made to stand outside his house from midnight until six o'clock in the morning as a punishment for allegedly having sheltered guerrillas there.

Mücahit\_lter, who had only been released on 3 March, was re-detained just after 11pm on 7 March.

All the other people named above were likewise detained in Siirt in the evening of 7 March.

#### 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 Siirt.

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

- urging that Mehmet Akkan and the other 17 people detained with him are given prompt access to their families, are provided with facilities to appoint a lawyer and that they are not ill-treated while in detention;

- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

**APPEALS TO:**

Chief of Police:  
Celalettin Cerrah  
Siirt Emniyet Müdürü  
Siirt, Turkey

**Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Siirt, Turkey**

Siirt Governor:  
Attila Koç  
Siirt Valisi  
Siirt, Turkey

**Telegrams: Siirt Valisi, Siirt, Turkey**

**Telexes: 72313 srvt tr**

**Fax (unconfirmed) + 90 8441 2760**

President Turgut Özal  
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06100 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: President Ozal, Ankara Turkey**

**Telex: 42875 bbk tr**

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**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 19 April 1991.