

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/35/97

EXTRA 69/97

Ill-treatment / Health Concern

14 May 1997

TURKEY Akbudak family
Karaba_ family
Karaka_ family
Lalealp family
Y_lta_ family
Varsak family
and other families from Tepe village near Lice/Diyarbak_r province

Members of the Turkish security forces have surrounded the hamlet of Tepe (local name: Gir) near Lice in the province of Diyarbak_r and are depriving the inhabitants of food and essential medicines. Seventy percent of the village population, consisting mainly of elderly men and women and children, are now said to require attention for problems such as dysentery, typhoid, brucellosis and malaria. Withholding essential food and medical supplies under these circumstances amounts to cruel and inhuman treatment. Nobody, even those who are ill, has been allowed to leave or enter the village for over a month.

The blockade appears to be in reprisal for a raid on the village on 5 April 1997 by armed members of the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party). Following the raid, gendarmes (soldiers carrying out police duties, mainly in rural areas, under the authority of the Interior Minister) imposed a total blockade on the village, which comprises some 35 houses with 150 inhabitants from a number of families (including the six named above) who live mainly on animal husbandry. Animals are said to be dying in their stables because the villagers are forbidden to graze them outside. It is not clear at this stage what access the population has to a clean water supply which would help them maintain basic sanitary facilities. The gendarmes are positioned around the village, and have posted some villagers as guards armed with sticks.

The villagers' relatives in Diyarbak_r, afraid to petition the authorities, appealed to the Human Rights Association on three occasions for urgent help, most recently on 8 May. The Human Rights Association passed their appeal to the Emergency Region Governor, the Provincial Governor and to the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission who have failed to respond so far.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On the night of 5 April armed members of the PKK raided Tepe village and abducted eight people, among them the five village guards (villagers armed and paid by the government to protect the village from PKK attacks) and the village headman. The body of one village guard, Hasan Lalealp, was found on 10 April - he had been shot. It appears that this may have been a reprisal killing by the PKK. Amnesty International condemns the killing of prisoners which is prohibited by Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions. Five other villagers were subsequently released by the PKK, but two remain unaccounted for. The village is under the authority of Tepe Gendarmerie Station.

In several provinces under emergency legislation a food embargo is enforced against the local population. Destruction and confiscation of food supplies is designed to deny members of the PKK operating in these provinces the possibility of obtaining food locally, whether given voluntarily or under

duress. The official policy of a food embargo allows villagers only very scarce and mostly insufficient supplies.

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

- expressing deep concern for the health of the inhabitants of Tepe village near Lice following the severe restrictions on their freedom of movement and the total deprivation of essential food and medical supplies since 6 April, apparently in reprisal for a PKK attack on the village;
- expressing concern that a large part of the population is said to require attention for very serious medical problems, including typhoid, dysentery and malaria;
- urging that the villagers be given immediate access to basic provisions and essential medical treatment.

APPEALS TO:

1. Emergency Region Governor:

Mr Necati Bilican

Ola_anüstü Hal Valisi

Diyarbak_r, Turkey

Telegrams: Olaganustu Hal Valisi, Diyarbakir, Turkey

Telex: 72110 OHVT TR; 72084 DYVA TR "please forward to the Governor"; 72090

JASY TR

Salutation: Dear Governor

2. President of Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

nsan Haklar Inceleme Komisyonu Ba_kan_

Mr Demir Berbero_lu

TBMM

Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Insan Haklari Inceleme Komisyonu, Ankara, Turkey

Fax: +90 312 420 5394

Salutation: Dear Sir

3. State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Lütfü Esengün

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Minister Esengun, Basbakanlik, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

President of the Turkish parliament:

Mr Mustafa Kalemli

TBMM Ba_kan_

TBMM

Ankara, Turkey

Fax: +90 312 420 5165

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 16 June 1997.