

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance" / Fear for safety

10 June 1994

TURKEY

Mustafa Bulut)
Ekrem Bulut)
Ramazan Bulut) members of an extended family
Fahri Bulut)
Ali Bulut)

The five men named above have "disappeared" following their detention, and there is grave concern for their safety.

On 13 May 1994, gendarmes (soldiers carrying out police duties in rural areas) from the Gendarmerie Headquarters in Lice raided the village of Esenli near Lice, in the province of Diyarbak_r. They detained the five villagers named above. The gendarmes then gathered the villagers in the square and under threats ordered them to leave their village. The villagers had to leave all their possessions and livestock behind. They have not been able to return and assume that the village has been burned to the ground.

In response to inquiries by villagers, Lice Gendarmerie Headquarters verbally denied holding the five men, but refused to state this in writing. The villagers did not receive a reply to their inquiries from either the provincial and local governors' offices in Diyarbak_r and Lice, or from the Lice Police Headquarters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The conflict in southeast Turkey between government forces and guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) has claimed more than 11,500 lives since it began in August 1984. A state of emergency remains in force in 10 provinces in the region and the Emergency Legislation Governor in Diyarbakir has extraordinary powers over three additional provinces. Police operations against suspected PKK supporters are being carried out all over Turkey. Procedures laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for the prompt registration of detainees, and for notification of their families, are almost universally ignored in the southeast, creating the conditions in which the "disappearance" of detainees can occur. Moreover, military operations in the southeast have been intensified since early 1994, and in addition to daily armed clashes the security forces are carrying out intense operations against villages. These operations have led to countless allegations of torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution.

In February 1993 it was announced that the State of Emergency Coordination Council decided that villages which might support the PKK or be open to PKK attack, should be evacuated. The Emergency Region Governor has powers to evacuate residential areas using formal procedures which would include compensation and provision of alternative places of settlement. However, the current program of forced eviction is being conducted unofficially and in an arbitrary manner, accompanied by threats, intimidation, ill-treatment and destruction of livestock, food and property (see: Escalation in human rights abuses against Kurdish villagers (EUR 44/64/93, July 1993). Tending their fields and flocks is made impossible for the rural population, according to observers, and the areas of improvised temporary dwellings and tents in the cities are growing with the influx of internally displaced people.

In May 1994, the Interior Minister for the first time officially acknowledged,

in reply to a parliamentary question, that a total of 871 villages and settlements had "become empty" in the region under a State of Emergency, "due to various reasons" and that "immigration from rural areas... has occurred".

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

- expressing grave concern for the fate of the five members of the Bulut family from Esenli village, named above, who "disappeared" following their detention on 13 May 1994 by gendarmes from Lice Gendarmerie Headquarters;
- urging that immediate steps are taken to establish their whereabouts;
- asking to be informed of the results of the investigation.

APPEALS TO:

Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie:

Orgeneral Ayd_n_lter
Jandarma Kuvvetleri Komutanl____
Bakanl_klar
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Jandarma Genel Komutani, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 0476

Salutation: Dear General

2) Lice Public Prosecutor:

Cumhuriyet Savc_s_
Lice, Turkey

Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Savcisi, Lice, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

3) Minister of the Interior:

Mr Nahit Mente_e
Içi_leri Bakanl____
Bakanl_klar
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Icisleri Bakanligi, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES 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 22 July 1994.