

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of torture / Health concern

11 July 1994

TURKEY

Recep Mara_l_
Nurcan Balc_ (f)
Nuran Çaml_ (f)
Murat Sat_k
Bahriye Sat_k (f)
Orhan Ate_
Ergül K_yak
and four others whose names are not known

The 11 Kurds listed above were detained during a police operation in Istanbul on 8 July, and have since been held in unacknowledged incommunicado detention, presumably in the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters. Amnesty International fears that they are being interrogated under torture, particularly since Nurcan Balc_ was transferred to _i_li Etfal Hospital on 10 July, reportedly suffering from fractures of her left knee cap and of the lower part of her spine as a result of torture.

There is particular concern for Recep Mara_l_, publishing director of Komal Publishing House and former prisoner of conscience. He has suffered poor health and disturbances of vision and balance since 1984, following a hunger-strike at Diyarbak_r Military Prison during which he was severely beaten. He requires constant medical attention and a special diet. He was a prisoner of conscience for more than nine years before being released conditionally in April 1991 after a partial amnesty. He had been sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment for membership of the illegal Kurdish organization R_zgari (Liberation).

In September 1993 an arrest warrant was issued for Recep Mara_l_ after he had pleaded in a televised discussion in July 1993 for a peaceful political solution to the Kurdish question. He has since been convicted in several trials of making separatist propoganda in speeches and publications and sentenced to terms of imprisonment. Recep Mara_l_ is once again considered to be a prisoner of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Nuran Çaml_, Ergül K_yak and Murat Sat_k were imprisoned in the early 1980s after the military coup and tried by military courts for membership of R_zgari. Ergül K_yak was sentenced to eight years in prison and Nuran Çaml_ to 11 months.

The conflict in southeast Turkey has claimed more than 12,000 lives since August 1984. A state of emergency continues to be in force in 10 provinces in the region and the Emergency Legislation Governor in Diyarbakir has extraordinary powers over another three provinces. Massive military operations have been intensified since early 1994 and, in addition to daily armed clashes, the security forces are carrying out intense operations against villages which refuse to participate in the system of village guards. These operations have resulted in countless allegations of torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution. In a press briefing in July 1993 the Prime Minister and the Chief of Staff called on members of the press to support them in the "total war" against separatism. Part of this strategy appears to be an attack on freedom of expression, as the second half of 1993 and the first months of 1994 saw a dramatic increase in detentions and prosecutions of lawyers, human rights activists, political activists, trade unionists, academics, writers,

publishers and journalists.

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. Detainees held on suspicion of political offences to be tried in State Security Courts may be held without charge for 15 days. This period may be extended to 30 days in provinces under emergency legislation or martial law. Emergency legislation is currently in force in 10 provinces in the southeast of Turkey.

Following a program of visits to Turkish police stations in 1990, 1991 and 1992, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (ECPT - established by the Council of Europe) reported "... *that the practice of torture and other forms of severe ill-treatment of persons in police custody remains widespread in Turkey and that such methods are applied to both ordinary criminal suspects and persons held under anti-terrorism provisions*".

The UN Committee against Torture (UN CAT) has also published a report to the effect that torture is systematic in Turkey.

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

- expressing concern for the health of Nurcan Balçık, hospitalized since 10 July, and of Recep Maraşlı who suffers from a medical condition, urging that they are granted any medical attention they may require;
- expressing also your concern that Recep Maraşlı and the 10 other people detained in Istanbul on 8 July are being held in unacknowledged and incommunicado detention;
- urging that they not be subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- requesting that they are granted access to their lawyers and families;
- asking to be informed of any charges against them.

APPEALS TO

1) Istanbul Chief of Police:

Mr Necdet Menzirci

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürlüğü

Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey

Telexes: 26177 IEMT TR

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Mr Hikmet Çetin

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Dışişleri Bakanlığı

06100 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: 90 312 287 3869

Telegrams: Hikmet Çetin, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Prime Minister:

Mrs Tansu Çiller

Başbakanlık

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr; 42099 basb tr; 42875 bbk tr

Faxes: +90 312 417 04 76 ; +90 312 230 88 96

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

President of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Sabri Yavuz

nsan Haklar Ara_t_rma Komisyonu Ba_kan_

TBMM

Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 420 5394

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 11 August 1994.