

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/Health Concern

7 May 1991

TURKEY:

**Ülker Karayel (f), aged 21, student of journalism
Murat Yücel**

On the evening of 1 May 1991, Ülker Karayel was taken into custody from her home in Kadiköy district of Istanbul, together with Murat Yücel.

Ülker Karayel, who studies journalism in Istanbul, has a congenital heart condition and was receiving medical treatment. When her family contacted the Political Branch at Istanbul Police Headquarters for confirmation of her detention, the police denied holding her. However, it is known that the Prosecutor's Office at Istanbul State Security Court granted permission to the police on 2 May to hold her in detention for 15 days. The record number for the case is 91-8906.

Nothing is known of the whereabouts of Murat Yücel. Their detention may have been in connection with Labour Day, 1 May, when hundreds of people were detained in Istanbul and all over Turkey. It is feared that the two detainees may be interrogated under torture and there is grave concern for Ülker Karayel's life.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Labour Day, 1 May, has a special meaning for workers and students in Turkey. In 1977, some 500,000 people rallied in Taksim Square, Istanbul, when sudden shooting by unknown assassins created a panic and left 36 people dead. Since the military coup in 1980, Labour Day has been abolished as a public holiday and demonstrations and rallies have been banned, but the day has retained its symbolic meaning. Both peaceful and violent actions by small groups have been the target of intensified security measures each year leading to the arrest of many political activists before and on Labour Day. This year some 20,000 policemen were reported on duty in Istanbul alone and hundreds of people were arrested throughout the country.

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.

In August 1990, the Turkish 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.

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

- urging that Ülker Karayel and Murat Yücel are given prompt access to their families and lawyers and that they are not ill-treated while in detention;
- expressing concern at Ülker Karayel's health condition and urging that she is given all medical attention she may require;
- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

APPEALS TO:Istanbul Chief of Police:

Mr Mehmet A_ar
Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü
Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey
Telexes: 30811 IEHM TR; 30812 EMMH TR; 26177 IEMT TR
Faxes: +90 1 172 81 82

President Turgut Özal
Devlet Ba_kanli_i
06100 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: President Ozal, Ankara, Turkey
Telexes: 42875 bbk tr
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(via Press Office)

Minister of the Interior:

Mr Abdülkadir Aksu
Içi_leri Bakanli_i
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister Aksu, Ankara, Turkey
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Faxes: +90 41 28 43 46

President of Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Eyüp A_ik
Insan Haklari Ara_tirma Komisyonu Ba_kani
TBMM
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: IHA Komisyonu, TBMM, Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: +90 4 42 06 941

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 18 June 1991.