

22 November 2000

Further information on UA 186/00 (EUR 44/32/00, 29 June 2000) - Fear for safety

**TURKEYK.Ö. (f) (Anonymity requested, name known to Amnesty International), aged 50 (corrected)**

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The 50-year-old Kurdish woman K.Ö. has allegedly been tortured again by police officers.

Men she believes to be police officers have come to her house twice this month. The second time, late at night on 15 November, men claiming to be "the State" apparently forced their way into her house, beating her and banging her head on the wall. She says they searched the house and tried to force her to sign a document, which she could not read, because she is illiterate.

The men blindfolded her and drove her around in a car for two hours. They threatened her, saying, "You are not going to the offices of HADEP [pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party], \_HD [Human Rights Association] or the newspapers, and you are not going to open a case against us." They said she and her children would be killed if she reported what happened to the newspapers or the \_HD. She was left in the middle of a field, and it took her three hours to walk home.

K.Ö. was reportedly tortured and raped by police officers at her home on 19 November 1999. Over the past year she has been repeatedly assaulted, although the harassment did stop after the original Urgent Action was issued this summer. The Turkish courts have rejected all of K.Ö.'s attempts to press charges against the police officers. Her lawyers are preparing an application to the European Court of Human Rights.

The prosecutor and the court who rejected her complaint against the policemen refused to consider a psychiatric report submitted in relation to her complaint. The report, prepared by the Psychosocial Trauma Centre at Istanbul University's Çapa Medical Faculty, stated that K.Ö. was suffering from chronic Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The psychiatrists concluded that she had very probably suffered a trauma.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Over the past few years Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of rape and sexual assault by the Turkish security forces. During incommunicado detention in police or gendarmerie custody both women and men are routinely stripped naked. Torture methods include electric shocks, beating directed at the genitals and women's breasts, sexual abuse and rape or threats of rape. For three years a legal aid project in Istanbul has been helping women who have been raped or have suffered other sexual torture by the authorities, by attempting to bring the perpetrators to justice. More than 130 women, mostly Kurds, have sought help from them. Of these women, 46 reported that they had been raped, while 90 had been sexually abused. The alleged perpetrators are mostly police officers. Others are gendarmes, soldiers, village guards or "repentants" (former members of armed opposition groups who have become informers). They are rarely brought to justice. Amnesty International has documented a general climate of impunity for torturers.

One factor in the impunity enjoyed by torturers is the difficulty of using medical reports to back up complaints of sexual assault in court. Many women

who complain they have been raped or otherwise tortured are not seen quickly by an independent doctor. This delay sometimes makes the resulting medical report of limited value. Another persistent problem is that state forensic doctors fail to record evidence of torture, and courts and justice officials have been reluctant to accept psychiatric reports of trauma as evidence.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or German:**

- urging the Turkish authorities to take steps to ensure the safety of the woman known as K.Ö., who was reportedly raped and tortured in Adana, and asking what action they have taken to protect her;
- calling for the investigation into K.Ö.'s allegations of rape on 19 November 1999, torture and continuing harassment to be conducted in an independent and thorough manner, including an evaluation of relevant psychiatric evidence, and for the perpetrators to be brought to justice;
- calling on the Turkish authorities to instruct law enforcement personnel that rape in custody is an act of torture and will not be tolerated.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Justice

Professor Hikmet Sami Türk

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**Faxes: + 90 312 418 5667**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Minister of Interior

Mr Saadettin Tantan

Ici\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_\_

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**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for human rights

Mr Rü\_tü Kaz\_m Yücelen

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba\_bakanl\_k

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and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

**Please could appeal writers in EU member countries also send copies to their Minister of Foreign Affairs.**

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 January 2001.