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Fear of Torture

8 July 1991

TURKEY: Nizamettin Kadan, journalist  
Murat Alkan, journalist

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On 2 July 1991, Nizamettin Kadan and Murat Alkan, who both work for the weekly Yeni Ülke, were detained in Do\_ubeyazit, a town near the border with Iran. The reason for their detention is not known. They are reportedly held in incommunicado detention and it is feared that they may be tortured.

Yeni Ülke (New Country) is a newspaper which deals mainly with Kurdish issues and the situation in the southeastern provinces.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority which is estimated to number some 10 million people. Any activity for a separate Kurdish political or cultural identity is punishable under Turkish law. The Kurdish population lives mainly in southeastern Turkey. Frequent allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been received from the region and the number of torture allegations increased substantially after the 1980 military coup. Since August 1984, when Kurdish guerrillas - members of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) - started armed attacks, an alarming number of reports of ill-treatment of detainees by the security forces have come from the eastern and southeastern provinces. Some 3000 lives have so far been lost in the continuing fighting.

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. In August 1990, the 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.

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 the east and southeast.

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

- urging that Nizamettin Kadan and Murat Alkan are given prompt access to their families and lawyers and that they are not ill-treated while in detention;
- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

**APPEALS TO:**

President Turgut Özal  
Devlet Ba\_kanli\_i  
06100 Ankara, Turkey  
**Telegrams: President Özal, Ankara, Turkey**  
**Telexes: 42875 bbk tr**  
**Faxes: (via Press Office) +90 4 168 5012**

Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Ba\_bakanl\_k  
06573 Ankara, Turkey  
**Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey**  
**Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr**  
**42099 basb tr**  
**42875 bbk tr**  
**Faxes: +90 41 17 04 76 PRIME MINISTER**  
**+90 42 30 88 96 (attn: Prime Minister)**

Minister of the Interior:

Mr Mustafa Kalemli  
Içi\_leri Bakanli\_i  
06644 Ankara, Turkey  
**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey**  
**Telexes: 46369 IC SL TR**  
**Faxes: +90 4 118 1795**  
**+90 4 125 6520 (Ministry of Interior)**

**COPIES TO:**President of Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Eyüp A\_ik  
Insan Haklari Ara\_tirma Komisyonu Ba\_kani  
TBMM  
Ankara, Turkey  
**Faxes: +90 4 11 91 664**  
**+90 4 42 06 941**

and diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 August 1991.