

EXTRA 96/96 Fear of torture / Possible prisoners of conscience 21 June 1996

TURKEYÖmer Parlaç_k	Nemir Özmen
Zehra Ayd_n (f)	Mahsum Bilen
Salami Güleryüz	Mehmet Birakç_
Serdar Karaç_	Adnan Gül
Arif Çakmak	Önder Özcelik
Ramazan Seyyidhan	Yüksel Bulut
Turan Tanr_kulu	H Mehmet Ya_uz
Ramazan Kartalma_	Ali Bingöl
Ekir B	Siksef Karaku_
Suad Gündo_an	Mehmet Ali Ya_man
Özkan Co_kun	Nihat Ca_rlayan
Faruk Yayg_n	Asef Kara_k
Aziz Kaya	Emin Dalg_ç

Since 10 June 1996, dozens of students from the Dicle University in Diyarbak_r have been detained. Although some have been released, the 26 persons named above are believed to be still in custody at Diyarbak_r Police Headquarters and at the Anti-Riot Branch of Diyarbak_r Police. Fears for their safety in custody have been heightened by reports that some were ill-treated while being detained, and that one has since been hospitalized.

Salami Güleryüz, Serdar Karaç_ and Arif Çakmak, all trainee teachers, were on the way to take their classes when they were detained by police based on the campus. Zehra Ayd_n, also a trainee teacher, was detained on 11 June from a house together with six other students. Several days later she was transferred to the Intensive Care Department of Diyarbak_r State Hospital.

These detentions are apparently aimed at suppressing public demonstrations in support of political prisoners on hunger-strike in Turkey (see below). If the detentions were carried out in order to suppress non-violent freedom of expression, Amnesty International would consider all those detained to be prisoners of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of political prisoners are participating in a hunger-strike which began in Diyarbak_r E-Type Prison on 25 April 1996. Among the prisoners' demands are an end to ill-treatment and obstruction of medical treatment. On 6 June 1996 a doctor examining prisoners who had been transferred from Diyarbak_r to Gaziantep prison, reported that several prisoners were close to coma and that traces of beatings had been found on six of them. The doctor was later detained for two days, apparently for disclosing information about the prisoners' conditions. Meanwhile the hunger-strike was changed from unlimited to limited, so that prisoners would hunger-strike in shifts.

Although torture for the purpose of extracting information or confessions is very widely practised in police stations, there is no such pattern in prisons. However, severe and sometimes fatal beatings of remand and convicted prisoners are frequently reported. Three prisoners were beaten to death at Buca Prison in Izmir in September 1995, and four prisoners died of beatings at Ümraniye Prison in Istanbul in January 1996. Amnesty International has repeatedly appealed to the Turkish authorities to put an end to such abuses simply by ensuring that remand and convicted prisoners are never brought into contact with police and gendarmes.

People suspected of offences under the Anti-Terror Law can be held in police custody without access to family, friends or legal counsel for up to 30 days in the 10 provinces under State of Emergency in the east and southeast such as Diyarbak_r, and for 15 days in the rest of Turkey. When not being interrogated, detainees are often held in cramped, airless and insanitary conditions. With no access to the outside world they are at the mercy of their interrogators. Torture is often applied to extract confessions, to elicit information about illegal organizations, to intimidate detainees into becoming police informers or as informal punishment for assumed support of illegal organizations.

Torture methods include being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, hanging by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

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

- expressing concern about the detention of dozens of students from Dicle University in Diyarbak_r since 10 June 1996;
- expressing concern at reports of ill-treatment of detainees and urging that the detainees not be subjected to any kind of torture or ill-treatment;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of any detainee who is not to be charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

President Süleyman Demirel

Office of the President

Cumhur Ba_kanl____

06100 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: +90.312.4685026

Telegrams: President Demirel, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Your Excellency

Diyarbak_r Chief of Police

Mr R_dvan Güler

Emniyet Müdürü

Diyarbak_r, Turkey

Telegrams: Chief of Police Guler, Diyarbakir, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

Ministry of Interior

Içi_leri Bakanl____

06644 Ankara, Turkey

Fax: +90.312.4181795

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

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 25 July 1996.