

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture/Health Concern

5 November 1993

TURKEY

Fatma Sava_ (female), 26, chairperson of Democracy Party
(DEP) in Mersin

Günay Dar_c_ (female), 28

Cafer Dar_c_, 40, husband of Günay Dar_c_

Adile Kuran (female)

Fethi Kuran

Hasan Ceylan

Ahmet Ceylan

M. Emin Ceylan

Belgin Kurt

Yakup Aykut

In a police operation on 25 and 26 October in Mersin, southern Turkey, the above-named officials and members of the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party in Mersin were detained. Reportedly, some of them had to be hospitalized due to severe torture. Their present condition is not known, but it is feared that torture continues to be inflicted on those who remain in, or who have been returned to, police custody at Mersin Police Headquarters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Democracy Party (DEP) is the only legal Kurdish party in Turkey, represented by 17 deputies in the Grand National Assembly. More than 50 of its leading officials and members have been assassinated in the past two years, the wave of killings culminating in the murder of deputy Mehmet Sincar on 4 September 1993. Scores of its members have been detained in recent months on charges of making separatist propaganda and supporting the guerrillas of the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). Amnesty International is receiving many reports of the torture of these people.

Turkey has a Kurdish minority estimated at some 10 million people, living mainly in southeastern Turkey. Since 1984, when guerrillas of the PKK started armed attacks against the security forces, more than 7,000 lives have been lost on both sides and among the civilian population. The security forces and the PKK are both involved in large-scale military operations covering the entire region. A state of emergency continues to be in force in 10 provinces in the east and southeast, though not in Mersin province, and the Emergency Legislation Governor in Diyarbakir has extraordinary powers over three additional provinces.

Turkey ratified the European Convention for the prevention of Torture on 25 February 1988 and the UN Convention Against Torture on 2 August 1988. Following a programme 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: *"In the light of all the information at its disposal, the ECPT can only conclude 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".

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. New legislation to shorten the maximum detention period came into force on 1 December 1992. Now non-political detainees may be held for up to eight days before being formally charged or released. Detainees held on suspicion of political offences may be held without charge for up to 15 days. In the 10 provinces under emergency legislation the maximum detention period for political detainees may be doubled to 30 days.

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

- expressing concern about the safety of Fatma Sava_ and the nine DEP members detained with her in Mersin on 25 and 26 October and held in incommunicado detention at Mersin Police Headquarters;
- urging that all 10 detainees are granted access to their families and lawyers, and that they are promptly brought before a judge;
- expressing particular concern about reports that some of the detainees had to be transferred to hospital due to torture;
- seeking assurances that they are granted all medical attention they may require;
- asking to be informed of their state of health and of any charges that might be brought against them.

APPEALS TO:

1) Chief of Police in Mersin:

Mr Halil _brahim Özkan
Emniyet Müdürlü_ü
Mersin, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Mersin, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Minister of the Interior:

Mr Nahit Mente_e
İç_i_leri Bakanl____
Bakanl_klar
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: İçisleri Bakanligi, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Deputy Prime Minister

Mr Murat Karayalç_n
Office of the Prime Minister
Ba_bakanl_k
06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Deputy Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey

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

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476 DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

+90 312 230 8896 (attn: Deputy Prime Minister)

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Mr Hikmet Çetin

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

D__i__leri Bakanl____

06100 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: 90 312 287 3869

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 4 December 1993.