

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 405/93 Threat of forced eviction and destruction of
Christian village

16 November 1993

TURKEY Hassana village (Turkish: Kösral köyü)

Amnesty International is gravely concerned about the threatened forced eviction and destruction by the Turkish security forces of the village of Hassana. The villagers have been given until 20 November to evacuate the village. The villagers want to stay, but have been warned that the village will be destroyed even if they do not leave. Amnesty International fears that this situation may lead to injury and loss of life as has happened in the forced eviction and destruction of other villages.

Hassana is situated at the foot of the Cudi mountain in the province of __rnak, near the border with Iraq. Guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) are very active in the Cudi mountain area, and it has been the target of frequent bombing raids by the Turkish airforce. Most of the neighbouring villages have already been emptied and destroyed. The villagers of Hassana are not armed and have attempted to stay outside the armed conflict, but find themselves under pressure to supply provisions to the guerrillas. Repeatedly villagers have been detained on charges of supporting the PKK, and then released. However, about two weeks ago one detainee reportedly stated after severe torture that villagers had provided food to the PKK and this led to the demand by the security forces that Hassana be evacuated by 20 November and destroyed.

Some 35 Assyrian Christian families, 280 people in all, are still living in Hassana, most of them children and elderly people. The village is said to be the most eastern and poorest of the Christian villages in the region. The villagers of Hassana traditionally make a living from weaving fabrics, their large looms fixed to the ground in their houses. Due to the armed conflict in the area, farming has now been made impossible and the villagers are dependent solely on weaving for their living.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In February 1993 it was announced that the State of Emergency Coordination Council had decided that villages which might support the PKK or be open to PKK attack should be evacuated. The Emergency Region Governor has powers to evacuate residential areas using formal procedures which would include compensation and provision of alternative places of settlement. However, the current program of forced eviction is being conducted unofficially and in an arbitrary manner, accompanied by threats, intimidation, ill-treatment and destruction of livestock, food and property (see: Escalation in human rights abuses against Kurdish villagers, EUR 44/64/93, July 1993).

According to a German television team the Turkish army ordered the 950 inhabitants of the Kurdish village Kur_unlu, near Dicle in southeast Turkey to vacate their village by 7am on 10 November. The team reported that the military

threatened to fire on the village after the deadline, even if inhabitants were still there. Furthermore it was reported that Kur_unlu had been attacked already three days before. Seven houses were said to have been destroyed, a woman wounded by shooting, the food stores and winter provisions destroyed.

The village headman of Kur_unlu reportedly appealed "to the people here and abroad: please help us!"

According to the Turkish Human Rights Association in Diyarbak_r, the Turkish army has destroyed 800 villages so far, 80 in the past month alone. Tending their fields and flocks is made impossible for the rural population, according to observers, and the areas of improvised temporary dwellings and tents in the cities are growing with the influx of refugees.

Detailed information and testimony received by Amnesty International in recent weeks indicate that the forced eviction and destruction of villages in the 10 provinces under a State of Emergency form an important part of the security forces' strategy against the guerrillas of the PKK and that such security operations against villages are currently being stepped up.

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

- expressing concern about the forced eviction of villagers throughout the Emergency State region, conducted unofficially and in an arbitrary manner, accompanied by threats, intimidation, ill-treatment and destruction of livestock, food and property;
- expressing grave concern about the reported threat by the Turkish security forces to evacuate and destroy by 20 November the Christian village of Hassana (Kösral_) in the province of __rnak;
- urging that the villagers are allowed to stay in their village; or alternatively are granted sufficient time to move their belongings to other settlements.

APPEALS TO

1) Minister of the Interior:

Mr Nahit Ment_e
Içi_leri Bakanl____
Bakanl_klar
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Icisleri Bakanligi, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795

Salutation: Dear Minister

2) 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

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476 DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

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

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

3) Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs:

Mr Refaiddin _ahin
Köyi_leri Bakanl____

06100 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Koyisleri Bakanligi, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 41 77 168

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Mr Hikmet Çetin, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

D__i__leri Bakanl___, 06100 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 28 December 1993.