

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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EXTRA 99/93 Torture/Ill-treatment

18 November 1993

TURKEY

Mahfuz Elçi, aged 62  
and 14 others whose names are not known

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Mahfuz Elçi and 14 other people detained on the night of 18 November in Alt\_nova, province of Mu\_, southeast Turkey, during a renewed attack on the town by security forces. The reason for the attack, during which three houses were destroyed, is unknown.

62-year-old Mahfuz Elçi had only recently returned home after receiving medical treatment abroad. Reportedly, he and two other men have been so severely ill-treated that there is fear for their lives.

It is believed that the detainees have been taken to the Brigade Gendarmerie Headquarters in Mu\_ for interrogation where it is feared they are being subjected to torture.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On the night of 3 October several hundred soldiers attacked Alt\_nova and burned down a number of houses. Nas\_r Ö\_üt, a relative of Mahfuz Elçi, was burned in his house together with his pregnant wife and six children (see UA 360/93, EUR 44/94/93, 8 October 1993).

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority estimated at some 10 million people, living mainly in southeastern Turkey. Since 1984, when guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) started armed attacks against the security forces, more than 10,000 lives have been lost on both sides and among the civilian population in the context of the continuing fighting. The security forces and the PKK are both involved in escalating large-scale military operations covering the entire region. A state of emergency continues to be in force in 10 provinces in the region, and the Emergency Legislation Governor in Diyarbakir has extraordinary powers over three additional provinces, one of which is Mu\_.

Amnesty International has received an increasing number of allegations that security forces have attacked residential areas as a reprisal following clashes with PKK guerrillas - particularly when members of the security forces have been killed in such clashes - or because of the inhabitants' refusal to join the village guard militia (villagers armed and paid by the government to fight the guerrillas of the PKK). One of the worst incidents in recent weeks has been the attack on the town of Lice in the province of Diyarbak\_r on 22 October where a General had been killed, apparently accidentally, and where clashes between the security forces and guerrillas of the PKK had been taking place in the preceding days. In the ensuing attack on the town an unknown number of people were killed, reportedly 398 houses and 242 shops damaged or destroyed. Days later 34 people were still receiving treatment for injuries, said to be

in many cases severe burns.

The International Committee of the Red Cross Commentary to Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions describes various practices, including reprisals, as "shocking to the civilized mind" and continues that such methods are contrary to the modern idea of justice in that it is based on the principle of collective responsibility for a crime and strikes at persons innocent of the crime which they are intended to prevent or punish.

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

- expressing your concern at the reported ill-treatment of 62-year-old Mahfuz Elçi and two others when being detained in Alt\_nova, Mu\_ province on 18 November, together with 12 other persons;
- urging that those injured are given all medical attention they may require; and that all 15 detainees are promptly before a judge;
- seeking assurances that they are not subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against them.

**APPEALS TO**

1) Minister of the Interior:

Mr Nahit Ment\_e  
\_çi\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_\_  
06644 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: + 90 312 418 1795**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

2) Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie:

General Ayd\_n\_lter  
Jandarma Kuvvetleri Komutanl\_\_\_\_  
Bakanl\_klar  
Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Jandarma Genel Komutani, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: +90 312 418 0476**

**Salutation: Dear General**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs:  
Mr Hikmet Çetin  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
D\_\_i\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_\_  
06100 Ankara, Turkey

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 18 December 1993.