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"Disappearance"/ Medical Concern

1 November 1994

TURKEY

Hüseyin Koku, President of HADEP party in Elbistan

Amnesty International is concerned about the safety of Hüseyin Koku, who "disappeared" in Elbistan on 20 October 1994. He is believed to be held in unacknowledged detention in Kahramanmara_.

Hüseyin Koku is the president of HADEP (People's Democracy Party) in Elbistan, in the province of Kahramanmara_. Reportedly, he was constantly being followed by the police and has been detained many times before, most recently on the day of the local elections in March 1994, when he was so severely tortured that he has had difficulty walking ever since and needs constant medical treatment. He was released by the court after three months in custody.

On 20 October, Hüseyin Koku, who is married with six children, was on his way to the doctor when a car pulled up beside him in the centre of town. The men inside the car, who were in plain clothes, were seen showing him their identity cards and then making him get into the car. When his wife inquired with the police in Elbistan on the first day of his detention as to her husband's whereabouts, the police reportedly confirmed that Hüseyin Koku was being held. However, when she repeatedly went to the station during the following days, the police denied holding her husband. The family, their lawyer and HADEP officials have since made inquiries with relevant authorities in Elbistan and Kahramanmara_, but have not received any information about Hüseyin Koku. They are gravely concerned for his health and safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HADEP (People's Democracy Party) is the successor to HEP (People's Labour Party) and DEP (Democracy Party), which were both closed down by the Constitutional Court for "separatism". Like HEP and DEP, HADEP has a predominantly Kurdish membership and works for the civil and political rights of the Kurdish minority.

The intensification of pressure against officials and members of HADEP coincides with the setting of a date for by-elections on 4 December. By-elections need to be held because 22 seats in parliament have become vacant, the majority of them as a result of the banning of the pro-Kurdish Democracy Party (DEP) in June this year. Another seat has been vacant since the killing of DEP deputy Mehmet Sincar on 4 September 1993 in Batman in circumstances strongly suggesting security force involvement. In the weeks preceding local elections in March this year, a number of DEP candidates and activists became victims of extrajudicial executions mainly in the southeast, before the party decided to boycott the elections. With the assassination of Rebih Çabuk, president of HADEP in Yüre_ir/Adana (see UA 374/94 of 11 October 1994, EUR 44/116/94), 101 officials and members of HEP/DEP/HADEP have been killed in the past three years.

Detainees held on suspicion of a political offence may be held without charge for up to 15 days. Procedures laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for the prompt and proper registration of detainees, and for notification of their families, are almost universally ignored in the southeastern provinces and increasingly disregarded in the rest of Turkey. Lack of proper registration

and notification is not only extremely distressing for families, but it creates the conditions in which "disappearances" can occur and torture takes place.

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".

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

-expressing grave concern for the health and safety of Hüseyin Koku, president of HADEP in Elbistan, who has "disappeared" in unacknowledged detention, presumably in Kahramanmara_, since 20 October 1994, and who requires constant medical care, allegedly as a result of torture in March/April this year;
 -urging that immediate steps be taken to establish his whereabouts and state of health and that his family be informed of these without delay;
 -asking to be informed of any charges brought against Hüseyin Koku.

APPEALS TO

1) K.Mara Police Chief:

Mr Tezcan Özkanl_
 K.Mara_ Emniyet Müdürlü_ü
 K.Mara_, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Kahramanmaras, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Governor of K.Mara province:

Mr Aslan Y_ld_r_m
 K.Mara_ Valili_i
 K.Mara_, Turkey

Telegrams: Vali, Kahramanmaras, Turkey

Faxes: +90 344 223 7617

Salutation: Dear Governor

3) President Süleyman Demirel

Office of the President
 Cumhur Ba_kanl____
 06100 Ankara

Telegrams: President Demirel, Ankara

Telex: 42303 kosk tr

Salutation: Your Excellency

4) Deputy Prime Minister

Mr Murat Karayalç_n
 Ba_bakanl_k
 06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Telex: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr

42099 basb tr

42875 bbk tr

Faxes: +90 312 417 04 76 DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER
+90 312 230 88 96 (attn: Deputy Prime Minister)
Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:
Prof Mümtaz Soysal
D__i__leri Bakanl____
06100 Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: +90 312 287 1886

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 12 December 1994.