

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 139/96

Fear of "disappearance" / Fear for safety 30 August 1996

TURKEY

Düzgün Zengin, veterinary student, aged 20

On the evening of 13 August 1996, Düzgün Zengin was on a visit to Izmir from Istanbul when, at around 11pm, police surrounded the house in which he was staying. The four people inside the house apparently split up and tried to escape in different directions.

Two of them, Elif Nazan _eker (f) and Do_an_uba__, were detained and transferred to Kocaeli where they were interrogated at Kocaeli Police Headquarters. They have since been charged with membership of an illegal organization and formally arrested to await trial. They are now being held in prison in Gebze and alleged that they were told by police that Düzgün Zengin would be killed. Elif Nazan _eker also alleged that she was tortured by being suspended and subjected to electric shocks, beatings and threats.

Düzgün Zengin has not been seen or heard of since the police operation in Izmir on 13 August. However, his family and lawyers are convinced that he would have contacted them somehow, if he were still at liberty. They fear that he, too, may have been detained and is now in danger of "disappearing" in police custody. These fears are heightened by the statements of two released detainees in Istanbul, who had been detained on suspicion of membership of the same illegal organization of which Elif Nazan _eker and Do_an_uba__ are accused. They alleged that they were shown a picture of Düzgün Zengin by the police and were told: "We are going to kill him".

In a press statement following the detention of four other people in Gebze on 15 and 16 August 1996, police claimed that Düzgün Zengin was responsible for the killing of two police officers who were shot dead in an attack on a police car in Gebze on 24 July 1996.

Upon inquiries by his family as to his whereabouts, prosecutors in Izmir and Kocaeli denied that Düzgün Zengin had been detained. In a letter they stated that he had escaped arrest and, therefore, could not be in detention.

Düzgün Zengin has been detained twice before: once about two years ago and again some six to eight weeks ago when he was held for a week by the gendarmerie in Maslak near Istanbul and reportedly tortured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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 such as Diyarbak_r, and for 15 days in the rest of Turkey. When not being interrogated, detainees are 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 presumed 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.

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. Lack of prompt registration and notification is extremely distressing for the families of detainees, and creates the conditions in which "disappearances" and torture can occur.

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Düzgün Zengin, who has not been seen since 13 August 1996 and is believed to have been detained following a police operation in Izmir on that date;
- noting that reportedly police in Kocaeli and Istanbul told detainees during interrogation that he would be killed;
- urging that immediate steps be taken to establish his whereabouts and to inform his family and lawyer accordingly;
- asking to be informed of the results of the investigation.

APPEALS TO:

1. Chief Prosecutor at Istanbul State Security Court

Mr Ahmet Köksal

DGM Ba_savc_s_

Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemesi

Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: DGM Ba_savc_s_, _stanbul, Turkey

Telex: 0607 30187 eist tr

0607 30188 iemd tr

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

2. Istanbul Chief of Police

Mr Kemal Yaz_c_o_lu

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü

_stanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey

Telexes: 30812 EMMH TR or 26177 IEMT TR

Salutation: Dear Sir

3. General Director of Police

Mr Alaaddin Yüksel

Emniyet Genel Müdürlü_ü

Bakanl_klar

Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Genel Muduru, Bakanliklar, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Mrs Tansu Çiller

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

D_i_leri Bakanl_

06100 Ankara, Turkey

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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 29 September 1996.