

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

20 September 1990

TURKEY:

**Mahmut YILDIZ
Ahmet KAYA**

Mahmut Yildiz and Ahmet Kaya, two villagers from the village of Akdo_mu_, were detained on 19 September 1990. They are being held in the Regimental Gendarmerie Headquarters in Siirt. The reason for their arrest is not known. However, since the beginning of September the security forces have been carrying out operations in the Siirt region and it is estimated that between 100 and 200 villagers have been taken into custody and detained for periods lasting from several hours to several weeks. Those detained are apparently suspected of sheltering Kurdish guerrillas and are believed to be at risk of torture during interrogation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority estimated to be some 10 million people, which is not officially recognized by the authorities. The Kurdish population lives mainly in southeastern Turkey. Frequent allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been received from the region and the number of torture allegations increased substantially after the 1980 military coup. Since August 1984, when Kurdish guerrillas - members of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) - started armed attacks, an alarming number of reports of ill-treatment of detainees by the security forces have come from the eastern and southeastern provinces, where more than 2000 lives so far have been lost in the continuing fighting. A state of emergency is in force in Siirt and nine other eastern 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. However, all information available to Amnesty International indicates that torture is still widespread and systematic in Turkey. Allegations of torture have continued since the transfer of power to a civilian government in 1983. 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. Under current legislation the maximum detention period before being formally charged or released is 24 hours; in cases involving three or more suspects or due to the 'nature of the crime' it may be extended to 15 days. This period may be extended to 30 days in areas under emergency legislation or martial law.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/telegrams/express letters/airmail letters:

- urging that Mahmut Yildiz and Ahmet Kaya from Akdo_mu_ village be granted prompt access to their families and lawyers and that they not be ill-treated while in detention;
- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut
Office of the Prime Minister
Ba_bakanlik
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Telex: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr
42099 basb tr
42875 bbk tr

Fax: 90 41 17 04 76 PRIME MINISTER

Atilla Koç
Siirt Valisi
Governor of Siirt Province
Siirt, Turkey

Telex: 72313 srv tr
Fax: 90 84 41 27 60
Telegrams: Siirt Valisi, Siirt, Turkey

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 October 1990.