

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/135/95

EXTRA 142/95

Fear of "disappearance" / Fear of torture 17 November 1995

TURKEY Süleyman Seyhan, a Kurd, aged 58

Süleyman Seyhan has been held in unacknowledged detention, presumably at Dargeçit Gendarmerie Battalion Headquarters, since 30 October 1995. It is feared that he is being interrogated under torture.

At 7am on 30 October, a military jeep stopped in front of Süleyman Seyhan's house in Dargeçit, province of Mardin. Local people observed that a soldier and a village guard (Kurdish villagers armed and paid by the government to fight the Kurdish Workers' Party, PKK) took Süleyman Seyhan from the house and put him into the jeep. They then drove to the house of Süleyman Seyhan's daughter Fehime and took her away as well. Fehime Seyhan was released after three days during which she was allegedly tortured.

Since Süleyman Seyhan's detention, his family have not been able to obtain any information from the authorities concerning his whereabouts. However, a released detainee reportedly saw Süleyman Seyhan and six other people in detention at Dargeçit Gendarmerie Battalion Headquarters, which, however, denied holding him.

Süleyman Seyhan has been detained and allegedly tortured on seven occasions at the Dargeçit Gendarmerie Battalion Headquarters and Mardin Gendarmerie Regimental Headquarters and was at least once committed to Diyarbakır Prison.

His sons and daughters have also been detained and allegedly tortured on several occasions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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.

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 in the southeast 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 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.

Any person suspected of supporting the PKK or any other illegal armed organization is at serious risk of torture, "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution. In 1994 there were more than 55 confirmed "disappearances", and more than 400 people were killed in unclarified circumstances. More than 20 cases of "disappearance" in police custody have been reported in 1995 so far.

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Süleyman Seyhan, detained on 30 October 1995 in Dargeçit and since held in unacknowledged detention, reportedly at Dargeçit Gendarmerie Battalion Headquarters;
- urging that his whereabouts be established without delay and that his family be informed accordingly;
- requesting to be informed of the result of the investigation;
- appealing that he not be subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment.

APPEALS TO:

1) Dargeçit Gendarmerie Commander:

Dargeçit Jandarma Komutan_
Jandarma Tabur Komutanl____
Dargeçit - Mardin
Turkey

Telegrams: Jandarma Komutani, Dargecit, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Commander

2) Mardin Chief Prosecutor:

Mardin Cumhuriyet Ba_savc_s_
Hükümet Kona__
Mardin, Turkey

Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Bassavcisi, Mardin, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

3 Dargeçit Governor:

Dargeçit Kaymakam_
Hükümet Kona__
Dargeçit - Mardin
Turkey

Telegrams: Kaymakam, Dargecit, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Governor

4) Deputy Prime Minister

Mr Deniz Baykal
Office of the Prime Minister
Ba_bakanl_k
06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telex: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr; 42099 basb tr

Faxes: +90 312 419 1547; 417 0476

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Adnan Ekmen
Office of the Prime Minister
Ba_bakanl_k
06573 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 419 0476; 417 0476

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 20 December 1995.

