

PUBLIC

AI Index: EUR 44/12/00

EXTRA 22/00

Ill-treatment and torture / Health concern

8 March 2000

TURKEY Ay_e Yeter, widow of Süleyman Yeter
Kaz_m Bak__, president of LIMTERI_ union
about 100 taken into detention
Emine Ocak and Ali Ocak

On 7 March 2000, police reportedly prevented a commemoration ceremony being held on behalf of trade unionist Süleyman Yeter, who died in police custody a year ago (see below). They beat people with truncheons and made mass arrests. The organization is concerned that those detained are at risk of torture or ill-treatment and that some may require urgent medical attention - around 40 people were reportedly injured.

A hundred people arrested at the service are now reportedly detained at the Security Branch of the Istanbul Police Headquarters. They include: Ay_e Yeter, Süleyman Yeter's widow, other members of the Yeter family, Kaz_m Bak__, the president of Süleyman Yeter's union - the Union of the Harbour Shipyard and Ship Construction and Repair Workers (LIMTERI_) - Emine Ocak and Ali Ocak (campaigners for those who have been "disappeared" and themselves the mother and brother of the "disappeared" Hasan Ocak).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Süleyman Yeter's death in custody was confirmed by the State Prosecutor on 7 March 1999, two days after he had been arrested and taken into custody at the Anti-Terror Branch of the Istanbul Police Headquarters (see UA 57/99, EUR 44/28/99).

In detention Süleyman Yeter said that after he had been interrogated he had been tortured by being stripped naked, badly beaten, hosed with cold water and forced to lie on ice. The day after his detention he was apparently taken away for interrogation again. He never returned to his cell. His lawyers who saw his body on 8 March saw what they believed to be evidence of torture.

A trial was opened against the policemen alleged to be responsible for his death in November 1999. The trial continues. Arrest warrants *in absentia* were issued for the defendant policemen, but it has not been possible for the court to establish their whereabouts.

Amnesty International fears that Süleyman Yeter's final detention may have been directed at impeding a court case against eight policemen from the Anti-Terror Branch of the Istanbul Police Headquarters accused of torturing him and eight others detained in 1997. The court had called the defendants to an identification hearing, to which Süleyman Yeter had been invited as a witness. He had reportedly been detained and threatened several times already because of this trial. No arrest warrant has ever been issued for the defendant policemen in this trial.

Hearings at both trials have been marked by a heavy and intimidatory presence of plainclothes police. At a recent hearing of the trial against the policemen who allegedly tortured Süleyman Yeter in 1997, four people were detained for shouting slogans on behalf of the complainants. Kaz_m Bak__ and two others were also detained and reportedly beaten at an earlier hearing of this trial.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters in English:

- expressing concern for the safety of Ay_e Yeter, Kaz_m Bak___, members of the Yeter and Ocak families and approximately 100 others detained by police on 7 March 2000 in Alibeyköy district, Istanbul;
- asking for assurances that they will not be ill-treated in any way in detention and will be given any medical care they may require;
- expressing concern at reports that police hit individuals with truncheons and manhandled them when they broke up the memorial service;
- asking to be informed about any charges brought against them;
- expressing concern at reports that witnesses and observers at the trials into the torture and death of Süleyman Yeter have been intimidated and may be at risk, particularly the main complainant, Ayse Yeter.

APPEALS TO:Minister of Interior

Mr Saadettin Tantan

çi_leri Bakanl___

06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams:Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey**Faxes:+ 90 312 418 17 95****Salutation:Dear Minister**Minister of Justice

Prof Hikmet Sami Türk

Ministry of Justice

Adalet Bakanl___

06659 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey**Faxes: + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667****Salutation: Dear Minister**Istanbul Chief of Police

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürlü_ü

Vatan Caddesi, Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams:Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü, Istanbul, Turkey**Salutation:Dear Chief of Police****COPIES TO:**State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Mr Mehmet Ali Irtemçelik

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara

Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 417 0476

and to diplomatic representatives of TURKEY accredited to your country.

Please could appeal writers in EU member countries also send copies to their Minister of Foreign Affairs. Many thanks

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 March 2000.