

TURKEYSalih Y\_lar (m), aged 20

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Salih Y\_lar, a youth member of the legal pro-Kurdish party HADEP, was reportedly tortured by police on 14 May, after he was detained in Diyarbak\_r, in southeast Turkey. After he told his lawyers what had happened, police detained him again and told him that the next time they took him into custody he would not be seen again. Amnesty International believes he is in grave danger of being tortured again, or killed.

Salih Y\_lar was detained at his home on 14 May, and taken to the Anti-Terror Branch of Diyarbak\_r Police Headquarters. He had been detained six times before, but had been well treated in custody. This time, however, officers blindfolded him, interrogated him about his activities with HADEP, and asked him to act as an informer. He refused to sign a statement and was taken into an adjoining room. There, he told his lawyers, "They sat on my shoulders, another person started to give me electric shocks to my toes. For about half an hour they did this. They put out cigarettes on my cheeks and my left knee. Whilst I was being taken to another place they dumped a bucket of cold water on me from behind. Around this time I lost consciousness. When I opened my eyes I was in the Diyarbak\_r State Hospital."

At the hospital, doctors treated him for injuries including deep cuts to his left arm, where it appeared he had been cut with a razor blade. Razor cuts were also visible on his chest and abdominal region, and he had a swelling at the back of his head. As soon as he regained consciousness, while he was still in hospital, the police pressured him again to sign a statement, telling him that whoever had assaulted him had been drunk, and repeatedly suggesting that it was HADEP members who had attacked him.

The police then took him and his brother, who had come to visit him, to another police station. Officers there reportedly saw that he had been tortured, and refused to accept him as a prisoner. The police therefore took him back to police headquarters, where they told him that if he did not sign the statement they would take him into custody again the next day. He refused to sign, and was released.

Later on, lawyers came to his home to take a statement. Fifteen minutes after the lawyers left, the police arrived and arrested Salih and his brother, and took them to police headquarters. The police allegedly threatened that the next time they would take both the brothers and their lawyers into custody, and "then you'd really see what we can do." Again they pressured Salih to sign a prepared statement, telling him that the next time he was taken into custody he would not be heard from again. They were then released.

On May 16, Salih Yilar was taken to the Prosecutor's Office by his lawyers, where a prosecutor reportedly refused to take Salih Y\_lar's statement about the torture he had suffered.

The police may have cut Salih with a razor blade to make it look as if he had attempted suicide, and to disguise the fact that they had tortured him. His lawyers noted when they interviewed him that he had ink on his fingers, indicating that his fingerprints had been taken.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

HADEP is the successor to two previous parties which the authorities closed down for "separatism". Although HADEP opposes the use of political violence, in some quarters the party is regarded as the "political wing" of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), an armed opposition group now known as KADEK. The authorities are now going through the courts in an attempt to ban HADEP. Earlier this month HADEP members in Istanbul were charged with supporting the PKK, on the grounds that they were following the PKK policy of adopting a non-violent strategy of civil disobedience.

In the past months Amnesty International has received numerous reports of HADEP representatives being arrested, in Diyarbakır and elsewhere (see EXTRA 65/01, EUR 44/066/2001, 17 September 2001; UA 280/01, EUR 44/079/2001; and UA 57/02, EUR 44/014/2002, 21 February 2002).

Torture appears to be regularly used in police stations to force prisoners to confess, or give up information about illegal organizations. It is also used to intimidate detainees into becoming police informers, or simply to punish people who are believed to support illegal organizations. Torture methods in Turkey documented by Amnesty International include severe beatings, being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, suspending by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern for the safety of Salih Yılar, who was detained on 14 May and reportedly tortured at the Anti-Terror Branch of Diyarbakır Police Headquarters;
- urging the authorities to ensure that he is not tortured or ill-treated in custody;
- urging them to make sure he is allowed to make a statement of complaint to the Chief Prosecutor, so that the allegation that he was tortured can be investigated;
- reminding the authorities that Turkey is a state party to the European Convention on Human Rights, of which Article 3 states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of the Interior  
Mr Rü\_tü Kaz\_m Yücelen  
Ministry of Interior  
\_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**

**Fax: + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Governor of Diyarbakır

Mr A. Cemil Serhadli

Diyarbakır, Turkey

**Telegrams: Diyarbakır Vali, Diyarbakır, Turkey**

**Salutation: Dear Governor**

Diyarbakır Police Headquarters

Mr Atila Çınar

Diyarbakır Emniyet Müdürlüğü

Diyarbakır Turkey

**Telegrams: Emniyet Müdürü, Diyarbakır, Turkey**

**Salutation: Dear Chief of Police**

**COPIES TO:**

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Nejat Arseven

Office of the Prime Minister,

Başbakanlık

06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Fax: + 90 312 417 04 76**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

and to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.**