

UA 96/99

Fear for

TURKEY Ahmet Zeki Okçuo_lu]
Irfan Dünder]
Niyazi Bulgan]
Mükrime Tepe (f)]
Ercan Kanar]
Fatma Karaka_ (f)]
 Refik Ergun]lawyers of Abdullah Öcalan
Ahmet Av_ar]
Turgay Kaya]
Derya Bay_r (f)]
 Hasip Kaplan]
 Niyazi Çem]
 Sait Karabakan]
 Zeynel Polat (f)]
 Hatice Korkut (f)]
 Do_an Erba_]
 Filiz Kalayc_]
 Fehim Güne_]

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for the safety of the lawyers named above, who have been assaulted and intimidated by police and others for representing the leader of the banned Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK) Abdullah Öcalan.

According to the lawyers, Niyazi Bulgan and Irfan Dünder were beaten by uniformed police officers inside the court building during a hearing in the trial of Abdullah Öcalan on 30 April 1999. The Amnesty International representative at the trial reported that somebody shouted, "They are beating up a lawyer", and when the plaintiffs, families of soldiers supposedly killed by the PKK, applauded, the judge simply told them to calm down, instead of demanding an immediate investigation. At the end of the session, the AI representative observed projectiles including stones and metal objects being thrown at the defence lawyers, who had to leave the courtroom through a cordon of police officers.

All the defence lawyers were taken to the police station adjoining the court, supposedly for their own safety. However, police officers who eventually took them away in a police van apparently threatened to kill them. They were taken to the market place of Yeni_ehir, where police beat and kicked them. The police officers reportedly tried to get people at the market place to join in, shouting "These are Apo's lawyers", but only a few did so. Lawyers Mükrime Tepe, Derya Bay_r (both female), Ahmet Av_ar and especially Niyazi Bulgan and Irfan Dünder were injured. The Ankara Medical Chamber examined them and confirmed that they had suffered severe bruising and cuts from sharp instruments.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Lawyers representing Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the illegal Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), have faced constant harassment since they were first allowed access to him on 25 February. That day, Ahmet Zeki Okçuo_lu and Hatice Korkut were kicked and punched when they came to board a boat to the prison island of Imrali, where Abdullah Öcalan is being held. They and their families have since received telephone threats.

The next day four other lawyers working on Abdullah Öcalan's case held a press conference at the Press Museum in the Ca_alo_lu district of Istanbul. They were jostled by an angry crowd on entering the museum and one of them, Osman Baydemir, spent a day under arrest in connection with a statement he had given to the press some weeks earlier. After the press conference, the lawyers were unwilling to leave the building, as there was a group of people outside shouting right-wing slogans and threats. After initially refusing to guarantee the lawyers' safety, the police eventually brought a vehicle to the museum and took them to relative safety.

After the last session of the current trial, on 24 March, Abdullah Öcalan's lawyers had to leave through a window to escape an angry crowd inside the court.

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

- expressing grave concern at the reported ill-treatment by police officers of the lawyers;
- urging an impartial investigation into the attacks and the ill-treatment;
- appealing that all necessary steps be taken to ensure the lawyers' safety;
- urging the authorities to issue a public statement supporting clearly the principle of the right to defence and the duty of the lawyer to act. Article 18 of the UN Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers states "lawyers shall not be identified with their clients or their clients' causes as a result of discharging their functions".

APPEALS TO:

President Süleyman Demirel
Office of the President
Cumhurba_kanl____
06100 Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: President, Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: + 90 312 468 5026
Telexes: 42303 kosk tr
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Bülent Ecevit
Office of the Prime Minister
Ba_bakanl_k
06573 Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: +90 312 417 0476

Minister of Interior
Mr Cahit Bayar
_çi_leri Bakanl____
06644 Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Fax: +90 312 418 17 35 / 418 92 08
Salutation: Dear Minister

Prof Selçuk Öztekin
Ministry of Justice
Adalet Bakanl____
06659 Ankara, Turkey
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES 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 31 May 1999.