

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/49/96

EXTRA 48/96 Fear of torture / Possible prisoner of conscience 29 March 1996

TURKEYHüseyin Ümit, lawyer, Board Member of Hakkari branch of the Turkish Human Rights Association (HRA)

Lawyer Hüseyin Ümit was detained on the morning of 29 March 1996 at his office in Hakkari. Police officers searched his office and the offices of the Human Rights Association which is located in the same building. Amnesty International fears that he may be interrogated under torture, and is concerned that he may be a prisoner of conscience, detained on account of his non-violent human rights activities.

Last year, on 15 June, Hüseyin Ümit was detained in a café in the centre of Hakkari and taken into custody in connection with his human rights activism (see EXTRA 72/95, EUR 44/69/95, 16 June 1995). Since his release he had received anonymous death threats.

Hakkari is under emergency legislation. Under the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code detainees in this area may be held incommunicado for up to 30 days without access (in person or by telephone) to their lawyer, family, or a medical practitioner of their choice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Human Rights Association continues its monitoring of human rights violations in the face of considerable pressure, with officials of the organization reporting harassment and threats. Board members of Diyarbak_r HRA branch were detained in December 1994 and committed to prison, on charges of membership of an illegal organization. The charges were based on statements made by witnesses who later retracted them as having been extracted under torture (See UA 450/94, EUR 44/157/94, 22 December 1994 and follow-ups). Two other board members taken into custody in February 1995 reported being tortured. The lawyer Sinan Tanr_kulu said that he was sprayed with high pressure cold water and that his testicles were squeezed. He was threatened with further tortures, such as hanging by the arms and electric shocks if he did not sign incriminating statements. All members of Diyarbak_r HRA board were later released, but their trials continue.

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

- urging that Hüseyin Ümit be immediately released or brought before a judge;
- seeking assurances that he is not being subjected to any form of torture or ill-treatment;
- expressing concern at the continuing harassment and threats against members of the Human Rights Association, and calling for them to be allowed to carry out their internationally recognized right to the peaceful defence of human rights without fear of intimidation or arrest.

APPEALS TO:

1. Hakkari Chief Prosecutor
Hakkari Cumhuriyet Ba_savc_s_
Mr Ali Aydemir
Hükümet Kona__
Hakkari
Turkey

Telegrams: Hakkari Chief Prosecutor, Hakkari, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2. Prime Minister

Mr Mesut Y_lmaz

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Deputy Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr; 42099 basb tr; 42875 bbk tr

Faxes: +90 312 417 04 76 - PRIME MINISTER

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

3. Minister of Justice

Mr Mehmet A_ar

Minister of Justice

Adalet Bakanl____

06659 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 3954

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey

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 5 May 1996.