

3 December 1998

Further information on UA 298/98 (EUR 44/48/98, 19 November 1998) - Fear of torture and ill-treatment

TURKEY Metin Yurtsever, 45 (dead), retired teacher, trade unionist
Hamit Çakar, 18 (dead), construction worker
Cihan Sincar (f)
Selim Özalp, Deputy Secretary General of HADEP

Police raids on People's Democracy Party (HADEP) offices are continuing, and more than 3000 party members have been detained nationwide since 16 November 1998. Two have died in custody, and detainees later released in Ankara and Gebze said they had been tortured. Party chairperson Murat Bozlak and more than 200 other leading HADEP members have been remanded in custody pending trial.

The police raids follow the arrest in Italy on 12 November of Abdullah Öcalan, General Secretary of the illegal Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), who has sought political asylum. HADEP, a legal political party representing Kurdish interests, staged hunger strikes and demonstrations against Öcalan's possible extradition from Italy.

In several cities, members of extreme right wing parties entered HADEP premises during the raids, apparently with police approval, to damage property and attack people. Video footage and the testimony of detainees show that the police operations were brutal and violent.

On 18 November 1998 18-year-old Hamit Çakar was detained at HADEP's Diyarbakır headquarters. His family were told some hours later that he had died. The family stated that they saw signs that he had been beaten round the head, but a medical report was issued by the Forensic Medicine Institute recording no injuries and giving heart attack as the cause of death. The body was not handed over to the family, and was buried immediately in the presence of just four relatives who had been notified by the police. The family have appealed for a second autopsy.

On 20 November 1998 Metin Yurtsever died in hospital in Kocaeli (near Istanbul). He had been taken into custody from the Izmit HADEP office where he was reportedly severely beaten by Anti-Terror Branch officers. Several of his ribs were broken, causing him breathing difficulties. He was taken to hospital where an operation failed to save his life. Police officers apparently destroyed a medical report stating that his death was due to torture and beating, and had a second report prepared stating that he had died from an arterial occlusion.

HADEP Deputy Secretary General Selim Özalp told Amnesty International that he was detained on 17 November in Diyarbakır by more than 20 police officers, including plainclothes Anti-Terror Branch officers. He said: 'As soon as we arrived and were blindfolded, the police officers began to swear at us and to beat us. I cannot say what they used to hit me because I could not see, but I think they used their fists. On one occasion they handcuffed me by one arm to the door of the cell for 14 hours. I could not sit down and

in the end I fell unconscious. For the first two days they brought no food.'

He said his blindfold was removed for two five-minute interviews with lawyers, on the fifth and sixth days of his detention. He was released on the orders of a judge after nine days.

Cihan Sincar, wife of Kurdish member of parliament Mehmet Sincar, who was killed on 4 September 1993 in circumstances strongly suggesting security forces involvement, told Amnesty International: 'I was taken into custody in Batman where I had gone on HADEP business and taken straight to Diyarbakir Police Headquarters - the Anti-Terror Branch. As soon as we arrived at Diyarbakır Police Headquarters they started swearing and beating us. They pulled my hair very fiercely with both hands, banged my head against the wall, and slapped me around the face extremely hard. At the same time I was blindfolded and this made it worse. There were other things that, as woman I found very difficult to accept, and that I would prefer not to discuss...

'They asked me if I visited my husband's grave. When I said yes, they said that soon I would not have to go to the trouble of visiting him, since they would make sure that I was with him permanently.'

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

- urging that prompt and impartial investigations be carried out into the deaths in custody of Hamit Çakar and Metin Yurtsever and that those responsible be brought to justice;
- urging that the authorities investigate thoroughly and impartially the allegations of ill-treatment of those detained in the course of police raids on HADEP offices throughout the country, in particular the allegations of Cihan Sincar and Selim Özalp.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior:

Mr Kutlu Akta_
İçişleri Bakanl____
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 418 9208

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Justice:

Mr Hasan Denizkurdu
Adalet Bakanl____
06659 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 418 5667

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights
Mr Hikmet Sami Türk

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 SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 January 1999

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on <http://www.amnesty.excite.com>