

PUBLIC

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Fear of "disappearance"/Fear of torture or ill-treatment

13 September 1999

TURKEY

Mehmet Çelik

Amnesty International is deeply concerned for the safety of Mehmet Çelik, who was reportedly detained on 7 September 1999 in Diyarbak_r city centre. The fact that the authorities have not acknowledged that he is being held increases the risk that he may "disappear" or be tortured or ill-treated.

Mehmet Çelik was last seen by his two sisters-in-law, who happened to see him between about 2.30 and 3pm outside Esma Ocak Park, in the centre of Diyarbak_r. They were going to speak to him, but when Mehmet Çelik pretended not to know them, they realized that something was wrong, and went past him without speaking. After they had gone a little further on, they looked back and saw that Mehmet Çelik and two other people in civilian clothes were being made to get into a blue Kartal car and a white Toros car, which were waiting by the side of the road.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Procedures laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for the prompt and proper registration of detainees and for notification of their families are almost universally ignored. This is extremely distressing for the families of detainees and creates conditions in which "disappearances" and torture can occur.

People suspected of offences under Turkey's Anti-Terror Law can be held in police custody without access to family, friends or legal counsel for up to four days. This may be increased to 10 days in the provinces currently under State of Emergency, which include Diyarbak_r city and province. During the extended detention period detainees have the right of access to a lawyer, under certain conditions. In most cases this right is denied.

When not being interrogated, detainees are held in cramped, airless and insanitary conditions. With no access to the outside world they are at the mercy of their interrogators. Torture is regularly applied to extract confessions, to elicit information about illegal organizations, to intimidate detainees into becoming police informers or as informal punishment for presumed support of illegal organizations. Torture methods in Turkey documented by Amnesty International include severe beatings, being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, hanging by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electro-shock torture, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Mehmet Çelik and asking for information as to his whereabouts;
- urging that he is not tortured or ill-treated;
- asking to be informed of any charges that may be brought against him;
- reminding the government of Turkey of its obligations under Article 3 of the European Convention of Human Rights to which Turkey is a state party which states: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment."

APPEALS TO:

Diyarbak_r Chief of Police
Diyarbak_r Emniyet Müdürü
Diyarbak_r Emniyet Müdürlü_ü
Diyarbak_r, Turkey

Telegrams: Diyarbakır Emniyet Müdürü, Kahramanmaraş, Diyarbakır, Turkey
Salutation: Dear Chief of Police

Minister of the Interior

Mr Saadettin Tanttan

İçişleri Bakan

İçişleri Bakanlık

06644 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: İçişleri Bakan, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 418 9208

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Mr Mehmet Ali İrtemçelik

Office of the Prime Minister

Bakanlık

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 312 417 0476

Please also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Turkey accredited to your country. It is most important for our work that they should be aware of Amnesty International's members' concerns. Please forward any replies you receive to your Section, to be passed on to the International Secretariat.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 October 1999.