

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 114/97

Fear for safety / Fear of "disappearance"

15 August 1997

TURKEYA. Gani Uçar, Kurd

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Shortly after midnight on 12 August 1997, masked men and two village guards reportedly attacked houses in Van, in eastern Turkey near the border with Iran.

During the raid they detained A. Gani Uçar at his home and took him with them. He has not been seen since and he is feared to be at risk of "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution.

A. Gani Uçar's detention was witnessed by his wife, Behiye Uçar, who recognized the two village guards: they apparently had come from the Uçar's home village of Nurettin near Mazgirt in the province of Mu\_ where the Uçar's used to live. However, the couple had moved to Van in 1994 due to pressure from the local village guards on A. Gani Uçar.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent weeks the press has reported several cases of "disappearance" and extrajudicial execution have been reported from southeast Turkey. On 14 August 1997 it was reported that the body of Ali Uçar was found close to Ac\_rl\_ village, near Midyat, province of Mardin. He had "disappeared" after leaving home in H\_rm\_z village near Gercü\_, Batman province, to go to Gercü\_. He had been shot.

On 13 August it was reported that two named "repentant" militants of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) and two village guards, accused of the killing of Abdülhadi Zeyrek, aged 65, in Mersin, had also killed Renaz (Halit) Ürgen, aged 17, and Ekrem Çelik, aged 16, whose bodies were found on 9 August near Güçlükönak, province of \_\_rnak. Reportedly the village guards confessed to having killed the two youths, who had "disappeared" two months earlier, and showed where the bodies were.

On 7 August it was reported that the body of Abdülhadi Zeyrek, who had moved to Mersin from \_\_rnak, was found in the mountainous region of Kocahasanl\_ near Erdemli in the province of Mersin. It was alleged that he had been abducted after he left home on 25 July with three repentant PKK militants, and was later killed by them. Reportedly he had been strangled.

On 13 August it was reported that Mehmet Ayd\_n, a taxi driver aged 25, was killed by unknown persons who opened fire on his car at the entrance to Zinaraaynsefa village, Yal\_m town, province of Mardin, on 10 August. According to relatives he had been threatened by village guards of that village and was previously beaten up by them because he refused to become a village guard.

Most victims of extrajudicial killings in rural areas are Kurdish villagers who refuse to join the village guard system, established originally as a civil defence force against PKK attacks on their own village. Today the 60,000 village guards form a paramilitary force deployed in operations against other villages and even incursions into northern Iraq, identification checks at road blocks and interrogations. In theory membership is voluntary, but in practice villagers are often put under pressure to join. If they refuse, they are accused of supporting the PKK and risk reprisals by the security forces. If they join, they are at risk of reprisals by the PKK.

"Confessors" or "repentants" are convicted members of the armed opposition unofficially recruited by the security forces to attack their former comrades.

"Confessors" have been implicated in a number of extrajudicial executions and have even publicly confessed such crimes.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of A.Gani Uçar, reportedly detained at his home in Van on 11 August 1997 by two village guards from Nurettin village near Mazgirt, Mu\_ province, and several masked men, as witnessed by his wife;
- calling for an immediate investigation into the whereabouts of A.Gani Uçar and for his family and lawyer to be promptly informed of his whereabouts;
- seeking assurances that he will not be subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against him.

**APPEALS TO:**

1. Van Regional Governor:

Mr Abdülkadir Sar\_  
Van İl Valisi  
Hükümet Kona\_\_  
Van, Turkey

**Telegrams: İl Valisi, Van, Turkey**

**Salutation: Dear Governor**

2. Emergency Legislation Deputy Governor:

Mr Ahmet Ertürk  
Ola\_anüstü Hal Valisi Yard\_mc\_s\_  
Diyarbak\_r, Turkey

**Telegrams: Olaganustu Hal Valisi, Diyarbakir, Turkey**

**Telexes: 72110 OHVT TR; 72084 DYVA TR "please forward to the Governor"; 72090 JASY TR**

**Salutation: Dear Governor**

3. Minister of the Interior:

Mr Murat Ba\_eskio\_lu  
\_çisleri Bakanl\_\_\_\_  
Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: +90 312 417 2390**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

4.State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Hikmet Sami Türk  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Ba\_bakanl\_k  
06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Minister Hikmet Turk, Basbakanlik, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: +90 312 417 0476**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

President of Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Demir Berbero\_lu  
\_nsan Haklar\_ \_nceleme Komisyonu Ba\_kani  
TBMM

Ankara, Turkey

**Faxes: +90 312 420 5394**

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 30 September 1997.