

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: EUR 44/76/93**

**Distr: UA/SC**

**UA 255/93     "Disappearance"**

**5 August 1993**

---

**TURKEY:     Ferhat TEPE, correspondent for daily newspaper Özgür Gündem in Bitlis**

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Ferhat Tepe who was abducted in Bitlis on 28 July 1993 under circumstances reminiscent of previous similar cases where involvement of the security forces is alleged.

According to eye-witnesses, Ferhat Tepe was forced by a man described as bearded, over six foot tall and carrying a walkie-talkie, to get into a car after he had left his father's shop in the centre of Bitlis town on the evening of 28 July 1993. Several cars of special teams of the police were seen patrolling the streets at the time. The Police Headquarters in Bitlis denied any knowledge of the incident.

At 6am the following morning Ferhat Tepe's father received a telephone call. The caller stated that he called on behalf of the Ottoman-Turkish Revenge Brigade (Osmanli Türk ntikam Tugay), that Ferhat Tepe was in their hands, and made the following demands: the closure of the Bitlis branch of the newly founded Democracy Party (DEP) of which Ferhat Tepe's father is the provincial president; one billion Turkish Lira; and the release of four French tourists taken hostage by guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) on 24 July 1993. The caller threatened that, if these demands were not met, Ferhat Tepe and the children of all DEP officials in the area would be killed. No further contact or demands have been made since then. It appears that the police are making no serious efforts to investigate the abduction.

Ferhat Tepe who is the local correspondent in Bitlis of the Kurdish-owned newspaper Özgür Gündem is said to have received death threats in the past. His abduction resembles other such cases where circumstances strongly point to the involvement of the security forces and which have resulted in torture and death after a few days, notably those of Vedat Ayd\_n in July 1991 and Metin Can and Dr Hasan Kaya in February 1993. Hence there is grave fear for the life of Ferhat Tepe.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since it started publication in May 1992, Özgür Gündem has been the only newspaper in Turkey which consistently reported human rights violations from the predominantly Kurdish provinces where a State of Emergency is in force and the security forces are pursuing a policy of "total conflict" against guerrillas of the PKK. According to Turkish press reports, this military campaign is to be accompanied by a major propaganda drive and the owners and

directors of all Turkish newspapers except Özgür Gündem and the leftist Aydınlık were called on 11 July 1993 to the office of the Chief of the Turkish General Staff for a press briefing and subsequent dinner with the Prime Minister. Following the arrest of the chief editor of Özgür Gündem on 14 July, the State Security Court in Istanbul is now seeking to close permanently the paper on the charge of separatist propaganda and praising the PKK. More than 80 issues of the paper have been confiscated in the past and at least seven of its journalists, distributors and vendors have been killed in unclear circumstances.

The Democracy Party (DEP) was founded shortly before the pro-Kurdish People's Labour Party (HEP) was closed down by the Constitutional Court in July 1993. HEP has been the target of alleged extrajudicial executions with over 40 of its members having been killed in the past two years.

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority which is estimated to number some 10 million people, living mainly in southeastern Turkey. Since August 1984, when guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) started armed attacks against the security forces, more than 6,000 lives have been lost on both sides and among the civilian population in the context of their fight for an independent Kurdish state. In mid-March 1993 the PKK declared a unilateral ceasefire and its intention to end the fighting and to enter the democratic process as a political party. Operations by the security forces against the PKK continued. The ceasefire was broken when on 24 May guerrillas of the PKK ambushed a convoy of soldiers, reportedly travelling unarmed and in civilian clothes. They killed 33 soldiers and two civilians. The security forces responded with large-scale military operations covering the entire region. A state of emergency continues to be in force in 10 provinces in the region and the Emergency Legislation Governor in Diyarbakir has extraordinary powers over three additional provinces.

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

- expressing grave concern for the life of Ferhat Tepe, abducted in Bitlis on 28 July 1993 by an unidentified person;

- urging that all possible steps are taken without further delay to establish the whereabouts of Ferhat Tepe and to secure his release.

**APPEALS TO**

1) Prime Minister:

Mrs Tansu Çiller

Ba\_bakanl\_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey**

**Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr**

**42099 basb tr, 42875 bbk tr**

**Faxes: + 90 4 417 04 76, + 90 4 230 88 96**

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister**

2) Minister of the Interior:

Mr Mehmet Gazio\_lu

\_çi\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_

06644 Ankara, Turkey

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

**Faxes: + 90 4 418 1795**

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Mr Hikmet Çetin

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

D\_i\_leri Bakanl\_\_\_

06100 Ankara, Turkey

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 16 September 1993.