

EXTRA 86/96 Fear of torture / Torture / Extrajudicial execution 7 June 1996

TURKEY Azat Beyter, Sabri Beyter and 16 other male member of his family
Hafiz Çiftçi, Cafer Çiftçi and 17 other male members of his family
Tahir Bal
Hüseyin Bal

Sedika Beyter (f), aged 80
Abdulhaluk Beyter

According to press reports and other sources some 50 Kurdish villagers from Bay village near Hakkari in the southeast of Turkey were detained during a recent operation by the security forces. The detainees are being held at the Hakkari Brigade Command Headquarters where it is feared they are being interrogated under torture.

Reportedly, three special team members dressed as PKK (Kurdish Workers Party) militants came to Bay village on 30 May 1996 and demanded bread from the villagers. Abdulhaluk Beyter and Azat Beyter, who had given bread, were detained. On 31 May the security forces raided the village and detained 12 more people. By 1 June nobody was allowed to enter or leave the village.

On 3 June another raid was carried out against the village and according to villagers' testimony villagers were interrogated in groups in stables. Sabri Beyter, had his mouth filled with excrement and was threatened with having to swallow it if he did not talk. During the search in the house of Halil Beyter, 80-year-old Sedika Beyter was dragged out of bed and beaten. She died two hours later. Her assailants alleged that she was hiding weapons. Cafer Çiftçi was beaten with rifle butts fracturing his leg. Abdulhaluk Beyter, who was released on 4 June, is said to be unable to walk due to torture.

Bay village reportedly persistently refused to join the village guard system and the operation was launched to either make them join or evacuate their village.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Government forces are fighting armed members of the PKK over some of the most rugged terrain in the country. PKK members frequently visit villages to collect food and other supplies, which are given willingly or unwillingly. The village guard system is used as a method of maintaining government control over territory. Villagers are offered a salary in exchange for bearing arms against the PKK. When the system was established in the mid-1980s, village guards were supposed just to defend their own village. Now, village guards are deployed as a paramilitary force to participate in operations against other villages, carry out identification checks on roads, and perform other duties.

In theory, membership of the village guard corps is voluntary, but in practice villagers are caught between two fires. Many are reluctant to serve as village guards for fear of being killed by the PKK. However, those who refuse to join are subject to reprisals by the security forces, or village guards from neighbouring villages, who accuse them of actively or passively supporting the PKK. Security operations in villages are usually carried out by gendarmes (soldiers carrying out police duties in rural areas), members of Special Operations Teams (heavily armed units trained for close combat and operating

under the control of the Interior Ministry), or village guards, or all three acting together.

Normally no judicial authority (such as a judge or prosecutor) is present at such security operations. The inhabitants of the village are assembled in the village square, and those selected for interrogation are taken away to a police station, gendarmerie post or other place of detention, or are interrogated in the village itself. Unprotected by the most basic safeguards against torture, such villagers are frequently exposed to the most brutal treatment - sometimes resulting in terrible injuries or even death.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the 50 villagers from Bay village near Hakkari, including 18 members of the Beyter family, 19 members of the Çiftçi family, Tahir Bal and Hüseyin Bal, detained between 31 May and 3 June and since held at the Hakkari Brigade Command Headquarters;
- seeking assurances that they are not being subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- expressing particular concern at reports that 80-year-old Sedika Beyter was beaten to death during the security operation against Bay village and that Sabri Beyter had excrement forced into his mouth during interrogation by the security forces in the village;
- urging that an immediate and thorough investigation be carried out into these allegations and those responsible found responsible be brought to justice;
- requesting to be informed of its findings.

APPEALS TO:

1. Hakkari Gendarmerie Brigade Commander:

Hakkari Jandarma Tugay Komutan_
Tugay Komutanl____
Hakkari, Turkey

Telegrams: Tugay Komutani, Hakkari, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Commander

2. Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie:

General Teoman Koman
Jandarma Kuvvetleri Komutanl____
Bakanl_klar
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Jandarma Genel Komutani, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 0476

Salutation: Dear General

3. Chief of the Turkish General Staff:

General _smail Hakk_ Karaday_
Bakanl_klar
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: General Karadayi, Bakanliklar, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795

Salutation: Dear General

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Mr Emre Gönensay
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
D__i_leri Bakanl____
06100 Ankara
Fax: +90 312 419 1547

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 20 July 1996.