

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 310/93 Abduction/Fear of Torture

7 September 1993

TURKEY: Abdullah Ay, aged 65, from Kelekçi village
_emsettin Ay, aged 35, from Kelekçi village
Mehmet Tekin, aged 47, }
Ömer Ünal, aged 55, } from Kay_kl_ village
Mecit Memi_, aged 42 }

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the above-named villagers who on 30 August 1993 were taken from their homes and are being held by village guards from a neighbouring village.

On 27 July 1993, village guards (villagers armed and paid by the government to fight the guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party - PKK) and the security forces reportedly set fire to houses in Kelekçi (Kurdish: Mîvêlê), Güne_li (Kurdish: _emsê) and Kay_kl_ (Kurdish: Mêhina) near Dargeçit in the province of Mardin on the border with Syria. This was reportedly done in retaliation for the villagers' refusal to take up arms as village guards. The villagers were then driven away. They returned later and tried to rebuild their villages.

On 30 August, village guards from neighbouring Alt_noluk came again to these villages together with a team from the gendarmerie (soldiers carrying out police duties in rural areas), gathered the inhabitants together and told them to leave, threatening, if they refused, to destroy all houses and kill those found still living there. They then took away the five people mentioned above as well as two others, also from Kelekçi, whom they later released.

Ömer Ünal is being held in the house of the head of the village guards and the others in the school of Alt_noluk village under the surveillance of the gendarmerie team. The men are reportedly being subjected to torture.

Village guards have no legal powers to detain and the gendarmerie can do so only on instruction by a state prosecutor or judge who should issue an arrest warrant. The arbitrary detention of the seven villagers and the continuing imprisonment of five of them is, therefore, illegal and tantamount to abduction.

Although a member of parliament intervened on behalf of the villagers and informed relevant state authorities of their situation, the Governor of Mardin and the Interior Minister claimed that they had no information regarding the event. No information has been forthcoming about the villagers' fate and Amnesty International is deeply concerned for their lives.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In July 1993 Amnesty International published a document giving detailed accounts of human rights violations allegedly committed by police, gendarmes, members of special teams (heavily-armed units operating under the control of the Interior Ministry for close combat with guerrillas) and village guards, during security raids on Kurdish villages which refuse to participate in the village guard militia. Membership of the village guards, a civil defence force organized and paid by the government to fight PKK guerrillas, is theoretically voluntary, but villagers are effectively caught between two fires. Many are reluctant to serve as village guards for fear of reprisals from the guerrillas, but those who refuse are often subject to reprisals by the security forces or village guards from neighbouring villages who accuse them of actively or passively supporting the guerrillas.

Unprotected by the most basic safeguards against torture, such people are frequently exposed to the most brutal treatment - sometimes resulting in terrible injuries or even death.

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

- expressing your concern about the abduction, continuing imprisonment and alleged torture by village guards from Alt_noluk village of five people from Kelekçi and Kay_kl_ villages on 30 August 1993;
- demanding an immediate and full investigation to establish the whereabouts of the five villagers and that all necessary steps be taken to secure their immediate release;
- urging that those responsible be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1) Chief of Staff of the Gendarmerie:

General Ayd_n_lter

Jandarma Kuvvetleri Komutanl____

Bakanl_klar

Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Jandarma Genel Komutani, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 4 418 0476

Salutation: Dear General

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 19 October 1993.