

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/85/96

EXTRA 89/96

Fear of torture

10 June 1996

TURKEY Sethettin Elçi, aged 19

On 7 June 1996 Sethettin Elçi was detained in Güroymak, province of Bitlis, as he was on his way to Alt_nova, near Güroymak, to visit his family. It is not known whether he is being held at the Güroymak Police Headquarters or if he has been transferred to Bitlis, the provincial capital. It also is not known whether his detention has been duly registered and on what grounds he is being held. It is feared that he is being interrogated under torture.

When he was detained, Sethettin Elçi is said to have been in possession of a copy of the Kurdish-owned newspaper *Demokrasi* and a cassette with Kurdish songs. Both of these items are legal. Reportedly his detention was witnessed - the extended Elçi family is quite well-known in the area. Sethettin Elçi currently lives in Izmir for work and job training.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The inhabitants of Alt_nova have been under pressure from the security forces for years, suspected of supporting the PKK (Kurdish Workers Party). As a consequence, about half the population, once said to number 6,000, have reportedly migrated to other towns.

Members of the extended Elçi family have been under pressure since Ayd_n Elçi, brother of Sethettin Elçi, was detained in 1991, tried as an armed member of the PKK and sentenced to life imprisonment; also, one of Sethettin Elçi's sisters was reportedly killed in 1993 while fighting for the PKK. Hüseyin U_urlu, their uncle, "disappeared" on 3 October 1993 at the same time as Nas_r Öüt, a cousin, died in the flames with his wife and six children when the security forces reportedly burnt a number of houses in a district of Alt_nova. Other relatives, including elderly members of the family, have been detained on a number of occasions and allegedly severely tortured (see EXTRA 96/92, EUR 44/114/92; UA 360/93, EUR 44/94/93; EXTRA 99/93, EUR 44/198/93; EXTRA 16/94, EUR 44/21/94; EXTRA 77/96, EUR 44/73/96 and their updates).

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

- expressing concern that yet another member of the Elçi family in Alt_nova, Sethettin Elçi, has been detained in Güroymak on 7 June 1996 and is being held at an unknown location;
- requesting to be informed of the place of his detention and seeking assurances that he is not being subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- urging that he be promptly brought before a judge to be charged or released;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against him.

APPEALS TO:

1. Bitlis Chief Public Prosecutor:

Cumhuriyet Ba_savc_s_
Bitlis C. Ba_savc_l____
Bitlis, Turkey

Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Bassavcisi, Bitlis, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

2. Chief of Gendarmerie in Bitlis:

Bitlis Jandarma Komutani
Jandarma Komutanl____
Bitlis, Turkey

Telegrams: Jandarma Komutanligi, Bitlis, Turkey
Salutation: Dear Sir

3. Interior Minister:

Mr Ülkü Güney
Ministry of Interior
_çi_leri Bakanl____
06644 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:
Mr Emre Gönensay
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
D__i_leri Bakanl____
06100 Ankara
Faxes: +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.