

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/98/95

EXTRA 109/95

Deaths in custody / Ill-treatment /
Fear for safety

22 September 1995

TURKEY

Killed: Yusuf Ba_
U_ur Sar_aslan
Turan K_l_ç
Mesut Avc_

Detained: Naciye Koç, nurse
Dervi_ Altun, Secretary of Izmir branch of Human Rights Association
Can Ercan
Irfan Güler, lawyer
Ibrahim Ergün, lawyer
Gül Kireçkaya (f), lawyer
_engül Gültekin (f), lawyer
Ercan Demir (Contemporary Lawyers' Association board member)
Fehmi Çam
Sevgi Binbir
and others

Four prisoners have been killed by gendarmes forcing entry into Ward 6 at Buca Prison, near Izmir in Western Turkey. Amnesty International fears further casualties as security forces prepare to enter Wards 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7 where an estimated two hundred prisoners are barricaded in. Meanwhile lawyers, members of prisoners' families and representatives of medical and human rights organizations have been severely beaten by security forces while seeking details outside the local state hospital. Sixty have been detained and are believed to be held at Izmir Police Headquarters.

The gendarme action followed protests about the prison's brutal regime by hunger-striking prisoners who refused to come out of their wards for roll-call on three consecutive days. On 21 September 1995 a large force of gendarmes as well as members of the so-called Special Team (trained for close combat in southeast Turkey, reputedly responsible for widespread violations) were sent into the prison. They entered Ward 6 of the prison by force. It is not yet clear, but it is believed that the four died either as a result of teargas bombs exploding in a confined space, or as a result of beating. At least 38 were seriously injured.

On 22 September autopsies were carried out on the four, and their bodies returned to the towns where they are registered as resident. The results of the autopsies have not yet been disclosed to families or lawyers.

Lawyers, members of prisoners' families and representatives of medical and human rights organizations, who have been denied access to the prison or to official information, were attacked by security forces while they sought details outside the local state hospital. A witness told Amnesty International: "I saw the lawyers Irfan Güler, Gül Kireçkaya and _engül Gültekin detained. They had each intervened with members of the Mobile Force [Anti-Riot Police] who were beating people. Gül Kireçkaya said 'You have no right to beat people that way. I am intervening because I am a lawyer.' Irfan Güler was assaulted by about eight officers. He was bleeding as they drove him away. Gül Kireçkaya and _engül Gültekin were dragged off by their hair, being beaten with truncheons".

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Buca Closed Prison in Izmir, where mainly political prisoners are being held, has been notorious for its harsh prison regime. This has led to recurring hunger-strikes and prisoners' protests demanding an improvement in prison conditions and a halt to ill-treatment and torture of inmates.

Health care in prisons in Turkey has been a major concern, and reports suggest that in Buca Prison, access to medical care is inadequate. This seems to be due, in part at least, to the refusal of the prison authorities to allow prisoners in need to be seen promptly by prison medical officers. In April 1995 a sick prisoner died in the prison, reportedly after the prison authorities failed to ensure he received prompt medical attention.

On 20 July, following the escape of four prisoners, 20 inmates who protested at searches of their shoes when being taken to court were severely beaten on their way to Izmir State Security Court. Some reportedly were taken into court unconscious, others bleeding from their mouths and noses so that the hearing had to be postponed. Although one prisoner had 10 ribs fractured, another had two vertebrae fractured and a third suffered from a suspected liver rupture, only some of the injured prisoners were taken to hospital and only with a significant delay (see Medical Letter Writing Action, EUR 44/84/95).

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

- expressing grave concern at the death of four prisoners in Buca Prison, and asking for a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation into the circumstances of the deaths;
- appealing that unwarranted and lethal force should not be used in restoring order in Wards **1, 3, 4, 5, and 7**, in accordance with the UN Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officers;
- appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of the lawyers, relatives and members of the Human Rights Association arrested from outside the local hospital;
- asking that those wounded in the disturbances at Buca Prison should promptly receive appropriate treatment.

APPEALS TO:

1. Prison Prosecutor

Mr Ya_ar Aslan
Buca Cezaevi Savc_s_
Buca Kapal_ Cezaevi
Buca, Izmir, Turkey

Telegrams: Buca Cezaevi Savcisi, Izmir, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2. General Director of Prisons

Mr Zeki Güngör
Cezaevleri Genel Müdürü
Adalet Bakanl____
06659 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 425 4066 (or use Justice Minister fax below)

Telegrams: Cezaevleri Genel Muduru, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

3. Justice Minister

Mr Mehmet Mo_ultay
Adalet Bakanl____
06659 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 3954

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

President of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission:

Mr Sabri Yavuz

nsan Haklar Ara_t_rma Komisyonu Ba_kan_

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 26 October 1995.