

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of "Disappearance"/Fear of Torture

9 November 1993

TURKEY

Erdo_an Oktay, agricultural engineer, aged 23

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Erdo_an Oktay, who was detained in the town of Tunceli on 25 October 1993 and remains in unacknowledged police custody. The organization fears that he is being tortured during interrogation.

Erdo_an Oktay was detained when the bus in which he was travelling to work was stopped at a road block. Several other passengers were also detained, but are believed to have been released. Erdo_an Oktay's father and his lawyer have been unable to obtain confirmation of Erdo_an Oktay's detention or to gain access to him. It is believed that he is being held at Tunceli Police Headquarters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of people have been detained in recent months on charges of making separatist propaganda and supporting the guerrillas of the outlawed Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). Amnesty International is receiving many reports of the torture of these people.

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority estimated at some 10 million people, living mainly in southeastern Turkey. Since 1984, when guerrillas of the PKK started armed attacks against the security forces, more than 10,000 lives have been lost on both sides and among the civilian population. The security forces and the PKK are both involved in large-scale military operations covering the entire region. A state of emergency continues to be in force in 10 provinces in the east and southeast, including Tunceli province, and the Emergency Legislation Governor in Diyarbakir has extraordinary powers over three additional provinces.

Turkey ratified the European Convention for the prevention of Torture on 25 February 1988 and the UN Convention Against Torture on 2 August 1988. Following a programme of visits to Turkish police stations in 1990, 1991 and 1992, the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (ECPT - established by the Council of Europe) reported: *"In the light of all the information at its disposal, the ECPT can only conclude that the practice of torture and other forms of severe ill-treatment of persons in police custody remains widespread in Turkey and that such methods are applied to both ordinary criminal suspects and persons held under anti-terrorism provisions"*.

Most allegations relate to ill-treatment of detainees in police custody during their initial interrogation when they are usually denied access to relatives or a lawyer. Non-political detainees may be held for up to eight days before

being formally charged or released. Detainees held on suspicion of political offences may be held without charge for up to 15 days. In the 10 provinces under emergency legislation the maximum detention period for political detainees may be doubled to 30 days.

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

- expressing your grave concern about the unacknowledged detention of Erdo_an Oktay since 25 October 1993 when he was taken off a bus at a roadblock at Tunceli on his way to work;
- urging an immediate investigation into his current whereabouts and requesting to be informed of the results;
- calling for his lawyer and family to be granted access to the detainee;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against Erdo_an Oktay.

APPEALS TO

1) Chief of Police:

Mr Altay Polat
Tunceli Emniyet Müdürü
Emniyet Müdürlü_ü
Tunceli, Turkey

Telegrams: Mr Polat, Emniyet Muduru, Tunceli, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Minister of the Interior:

Mr Nahit Mente_e
İçisleri Bakanl____
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 428 4346

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Deputy Prime Minister:

Mr Murat Karayalç_n
Office of the Prime Minister
Ba_bakanl_k
06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Deputy Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr; 42099 basb tr; 42875 bbk tr

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476 DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

+90 312 230 8896 (attn: Deputy Prime Minister)

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs:
Mr Hikmet Çetin
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
D_i_leri Bakanl____
06100 Ankara, Turkey
Faxes: 90 312 287 3869

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 7 December 1993.