

EXTERNAL

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Fear of Torture

8 November 1995

**TURKEY** Necmiye Aslano\_lu (f), aged 24, journalist with weekly  
*Özgür Halk*

**Metin Acet**, aged 24, journalist with daily *Özgür Politika*

**Nuran Tekda\_ (f)**, aged 25, journalist with *Özgür Halk*

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On 3 November 1995, the three Kurdish journalists named above were stopped at a roadblock as they were going to Batman, reportedly to visit a friend. They were taken into detention, and are now believed to be in Batman Police Headquarters, where it is feared they are being interrogated under torture.

One of the three, Necmiye Aslano\_lu, has been detained four times before. The first time, in December 1993, she was held for 13 days during which, she claimed, she was subjected to all kinds of torture. At the time, she was working for the Kurdish-owned daily newspaper *Özgür Gündem* which ceased publication in 1994. Most recently she was detained in April 1995 and subsequently tried on charges of support of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). On 3 October she was released by Diyarbak\_r State Security Court. Necmiye Aslano\_lu was allegedly threatened while in prison, and there were also reportedly threats that she would be killed if released by the court.

It is not known whether the authorities have acknowledged the detention of the three journalists. They may be held incommunicado for a maximum of 30 days under Emergency Legislation, currently in force in Batman province.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Kurdish-owned newspaper *Özgür Gündem* (Free Agenda) and its successors *Özgür Ülke* (Free Land) and *Yeni Politika* (New Policy) consistently reported human rights violations carried out in the southeast. Each paper was forced to cease operating either by official closure or threat of official closure. Seven correspondents and 11 people distributing and selling these newspapers were murdered under circumstances suggesting security forces involvement, and two staff journalists "disappeared". Scores of their editors and other staff were detained and tortured. Many of them are still in prison and on trial or awaiting trial.

People suspected of offences under the Anti-Terror Law can be held in police custody without access to family, friends or legal counsel for up to 30 days in the 10 provinces under State of Emergency in the southeast and for 15 days in the rest of Turkey. When not being interrogated, detainees are held in cramped, airless and insanitary conditions. With no access to the outside world they are at the mercy of their interrogators. Torture methods include being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, hanging by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

Any person suspected of supporting the PKK or any other illegal armed organization is at serious risk of torture, "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution. In 1994 there were more than 55 confirmed "disappearances", and more than 400 people were killed in unclarified circumstances. At least 20 cases of "disappearance" in police custody have been reported in 1995 so far.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Necmiye Aslano\_lu, Metin Acet and Nuran Tekda\_, detained on 3 November 1995 on their way to Batman and presumably held at Batman Police Headquarters;
- appealing that they are not subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- urging that they are given access to their families and lawyers;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against them.

**APPEALS TO:**

1. Batman Chief Prosecutor:

Cumhuriyet Ba\_savc\_s\_  
Hükümet Kona\_\_  
Batman, Turkey

**Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Bassavcisi, Batman, Turkey**

**Salutation: Dear Sir**

2. Batman Chief of Police:

Batman Emniyet Müdürü  
Emniyet Müdürlü\_ü  
Batman, Turkey

**Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Batman, Turkey**

**Salutation: Dear Sir**

3) State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Adnan Ekmen  
Office of the Prime Minister  
Ba\_bakanl\_k  
06573 Ankara, Turkey

**Telegrams: Adnan Ekmen, Office Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey**

**Faxes: +90 312 417 0476**

**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 8 December 1995.