

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/150/95

EXTRA 158/95

Fear of arbitrary killing

8 December 1995

TURKEYHakan Güler, aged 24, sports teacher
Kadri Tursun, teacher
Köksal Gümü , Deputy Director, Lice National Education Branch

On the evening of 21 November 1995, Hakan Güler, Kadri Tursun and Köksal Gümü_ were abducted from a minibus by armed members of the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) in the evening of 21 November 1995. The three were travelling in a minibus from Diyarbak_r, where they had been doing some shopping, to Lice, a small town about 80 kilometres away. Other passengers captured at the same time were released over the following days but the three teachers remain in custody. It is feared that their lives are in danger.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The PKK has been fighting Turkish security forces since 1984 in an intense conflict in which more than 20,000 people have been killed, including civilians. Gross human rights violations committed by the Turkish security forces, including torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial executions, have been thoroughly documented by Amnesty International, which has also, repeatedly and publicly, condemned the PKK's killings of prisoners and civilians and in particular the "policy" of killing teachers declared in 1994. In September and October 1994, the PKK abducted and killed 19 teachers, most of whom were working in small villages in the mainly Kurdish southeast. After strong public and international reaction, the killings halted, but in October 1995 three more teachers -- Huseyin Kocaba_, Ökke_ Kaya and Gürkan Ar_turk -- were captured and killed by the PKK.

During 1995 alone, armed PKK members have killed over 70 civilians and prisoners. Most of the victims are Kurdish villagers who participated in the system of government-armed village guards, and their extended families, including women and children. In a public response to Amnesty International's condemnation of these murders, a spokesperson for ERNK, the National Liberation Front of Kurdistan, the popular front established by the PKK, claimed that the villagers and teachers killed by the PKK were "members of MIT (Turkish intelligence agency)" or village guards, and that "the number of people killed is very limited". In fact, the victims are numbered in their hundreds, and the killings are continuing.

Amnesty International has received no evidence to support the claim that teachers are working to gather military intelligence. Moreover, just as it unconditionally opposes the practice of hostage-taking, Amnesty International opposes the killing of any prisoner - an abuse forbidden under Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions (1949), which the PKK has in the past announced it would respect.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the teachers Hakan Güler, Kadri Tursun and Köksal Gümü_, held by armed PKK members since 21 November 1995;
- pointing out that Common Article 3 of the Geneva Convention (1949) forbids warring parties to harm those who are not taking part in a conflict, in particular civilians and prisoners.

2

Please ask the following organizations to use all available channels to pass on your appeals to the leadership of the PKK:

APPEALS TO:

Please select the most appropriate address(es) for your appeals.

Americas:

Kurdistan Committee
2487 Kalader Avenue
Suite 203
Ottawa, Ontario K1 V8B8
Canada

Telegrams: Kurdistan Committee, 2487 Kalader Avenue, Ottawa, Canada
Faxes: +1 613 733 0090

Asia:

Kurdistan Information Centre
PO Box 4773 GPO
Melbourne
Vic. 3000 Australia
faxes: +61 3 663 5141

Europe:

Informationsstelle Kurdistan
Postfach 101937
50459 Cologne
Germany
faxes: +49 221 1300 424

Other fax numbers:

Kurdistan Information Bureau, Austria: **+43 1 545 5821**

Comite du Kurdistan, Belgium: **+32 2 230 9208**

ERNK-Byra, Denmark: **+45 33 93 63 83**

Ufficio di Informazione del Kurdistan, Italy: **+39 64 44 1152**

Centre de Informaçion y Cooperaçion con el Kurdistan: **+34 1 519 2357**

Kurdistan Informationsbyra, Sweden: **+46 8 612 9321**

Comite du Kurdistan, Switzerland: **+41 22 329 4787**

American Kurdish Information Network, USA: **+ 1 202 483 6476**

(Salutation for all: Dear Sir or Madam)

NO COPIES

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 January 1996.