

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

22 November 1990

TURKEY: Ibrahim _ahin, aged 45-50
Nihat Özcan
Zeynep Polat (f)
Leyla Polat (f), daughter of Zeynep Polat
_engül Mert (f)

On 16 November at about 3 o'clock in the morning Ibrahim _ahin was detained at his home in Istanbul. He was seen being beaten by several police officers at the time of his detention. He is said to have been imprisoned and tortured on numerous previous occasions and had been released from prison only seven or eight months ago. Nihat Özcan was detained at his house in Sefaköy, while Zeynep Polat and her daughter Leyla, and _engül Mert were detained at their homes in Gazi district, all in Istanbul.

The five detainees named above are reported to be held incommunicado at Istanbul Police Headquarters and it is feared that they are being tortured during interrogation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkey ratified the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture on 25 February 1988 and the UN Convention Against Torture on 2 August 1988. However, all information available to Amnesty International indicates that torture is still widespread and systematic in Turkey. Allegations of torture have continued since the transfer of power to a civilian government in 1983. 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. Under current legislation the maximum detention period before being formally charged or released is 24 hours; in cases involving three or more suspects or due to the 'nature of the crime' it may be extended to 15 days. This period may be extended to 30 days in areas under emergency legislation or martial law. In August 1990, the government derogated from Articles 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- urging that the five people named above are given prompt access to their families and lawyers and that they are not ill-treated while in detention;
- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

APPEALS TO

President Turgut Özal
Devlet Ba_kanli_i
06100 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: President Özal, Ankara, Turkey
Telexes: 42303 KOSK TR

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü
Mehmet A_ar
Istanbul Chief of Police
_stanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey
Telexes: 30811 IEHM TR or 30812 EMMH TR
Faxes: + 90 1 172 8182

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 January 1991.