

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

22 November 1990

TURKEY: Gamze Turan (f), Chairperson of Association of DEMKAD
(Democratic Women's Association)
Elif Özpolat (f))
Arzu Çolak (f)) DEMKAD
Serap Kayao_lu (f)) board members
Meryem Helik (f))
+ her mother and father
Songül Özyurt (f), Member of TAYAD (Prisoners' Families
Solidarity Association)

At about 0700 hours on 22 November 1990 Gamze Turan, Elif Özpolat, Arzu Çolak, Serap Kayao_lu, Meryem Helik and both her parents were detained from their homes in Ankara by police. Songül Özyurt was detained in the evening of 21 November. They are thought to be held at the First (Political) Branch of Ankara Police Headquarters and it is feared that they are being interrogated under torture.

Songül Özyurt had been detained in August and alleged that she was tortured then for two days. A doctor certified her injuries. During arrests in Ankara in September the treasurer of DEMKAD, two and a half months pregnant, was detained and reportedly beaten on a number of occasions, resulting in her finally miscarrying in Police Headquarters. There were numerous other allegations of torture at the same time, many of which were supported by medical reports.

Amnesty International has copies of a number of documents issued by the Ankara Chief Prosecutor's office denying lawyers access to their clients, in spite of the fact that this right is enshrined in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code, and that the right of access is recognised in international instruments as an important safeguard against torture.

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. In August 1990, the Turkish government derogated from Articles 5, 6, 8, 10, 11 and 13 of the European Convention on Human Rights, all of which contain important safeguards for human rights.

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

- urging that the eight detainees named above are given prompt access to their families and lawyers and that they should not be 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

Ankara Emniyet Müdürü
Hasan Özdemir
Ankara Chief of Police
Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: 90 4 341 0591 EMNIYET MUDURU
Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Ankara, Turkey

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country

Please try to organize appeals from women's organizations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 3 January 1991.