

EXTRA 01/95

Fear of Torture

6 January 1995

TURKEYSalih Güler, 24, correspondent for Özgür Ülke newspaper

It is feared that Salih Güler is being tortured in incommunicado detention. He was detained on 4 January 1995 when three plainclothes police officers raided the office of *Özgür Ülke* (Free Land) in Diyarbak_r, where he has been working for about six months. The officers checked the identity of all those present before taking Salih Güler away. He has reportedly been handed over to the Gendarmerie Intelligence Headquarters (J_TEM) in Diyarbak_r.

In recent weeks two correspondents of *Özgür Ülke* have alleged that they were tortured in police custody: Erdo_an Zamur, correspondent in **Diyarbak_r**, was detained between 7 and 9 December. He stated: *"At the Directorate of the Anti-Riot Police [in Diyarbak_r] I was tied to a door while handcuffed and beaten after being stripped naked. Later, they continued to apply various torture methods such as squeezing the testicles, stepping on my body after making me lie down on my back, hosing with pressurized water. They were continuously asking about our contacts and sources of information."* Türker Alp, Public Relations Director of *Özgür Ülke*, who had been detained in Gebze, made the following statement after his release in mid-December: *"After being detained I was taken to Kocaeli Police Headquarters. During interrogation there I was only asked questions about the newspaper. First they blindfolded me and then suspended me on a hanger. While I was hanging, they gave electric shocks to my genital organ and fingers while continuously insulting me. They also threatened me with death, saying, 'Either you take off to the mountains or flee abroad, otherwise we will kill you'".* Türker Alp also stated that he was not given a medical certificate when taken to the Forensic Medical Institute in Kocaeli for examination before release.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sources of information on human rights abuses in southeast Turkey are being systematically stifled. Scrutiny of the rapidly deteriorating human rights situation by outside agencies is becoming increasingly difficult.

In December, the newspaper *Özgür Ülke* became the target of a coordinated bomb attack which destroyed three of its premises in Ankara and Istanbul on the night of 3 December, killing one staff member and injuring 18 in addition to wrecking the newspaper's facilities. The Kurdish-owned newspaper and its predecessors, the only papers in Turkey consistently reporting human rights violations in particular from the southeast, have been continuously prosecuted. Almost all of its issues have been confiscated. Six of its correspondents and 11 people distributing and selling the newspaper have been murdered under circumstances suggesting security force involvement, and two staff journalists have "disappeared". Scores of its editors, correspondents and other staff have been detained and tortured. By 19 December, 35 were in prison or police custody, standing or awaiting trial.

Furthermore, three prominent human rights lawyers were imprisoned on 16 December, pending trial, for publishing a report on human rights violations in the southeast, and leading officials of the Turkish Human Rights Association and the Turkish Human Rights Foundation have been on trial since December 1994 for similar offences. Guilty verdicts are expected for the week of 9 January (see UA 450/94, 22 December 1994, EUR 44/157/94). Human rights activists

monitoring the fast deteriorating human rights situation are being harassed, detained, tortured, imprisoned, threatened, murdered and have "disappeared" (see *Turkey: Human rights defenders at risk*, EUR 44/88/94, September 1994).

In October 1994, the Turkish Government banned entry for Amnesty International's researcher on Turkey. Visits by international delegations and the work of foreign journalists in the southeast are being hampered in many ways.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Salih Güler, detained in Diyarbak_r on 4 January 1995 and believed to be held incommunicado at the Gendarmerie Intelligence Headquarters (J_TEM);
- urging that he be allowed access to a lawyer and is taken before a judge to be charged or released without delay;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against Salih Güler.

APPEALS TO

1) Deputy Prime Minister

Mr Murat Karayalç_n

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 04 76 DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

2) State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Azimet Köylüo_lu

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Chief Prosecutor at Diyarbak_r State Security Court:

DGM Ba_savc_s_

Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemesi

Diyarbak_r, Turkey

Telegrams: DGM Bassavcisi, Diyarbakir, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 2 February 1995.