

TURKEYIshak Tepe, Kurdish businessman, aged 53

Ishak Tepe, a former *imam* (prayer leader) and now a businessman and politician, was detained by gendarmes on 24 February 1996 in Bartın where he was visiting someone in prison. Amnesty International fears that he may be facing torture during interrogation.

Ishak Tepe's family were informed of his detention in a telephone call from the gendarmerie in Bartın and told that he was to be transferred to Bitlis.

Fears for his safety are heightened by the fact that his nephew, Safyettin Tepe, died in police custody in Bitlis in 1995, and his son, Ferhat Tepe, a journalist in Bitlis, was abducted and killed in suspicious circumstances in 1993.

Following the abduction and murder of his son, Ishak Tepe moved to Istanbul from Bitlis, where he was president of the now closed Democracy Party (DEP).

As he tried to identify Ferhat's killers, his family faced continuous harassment from the security forces. In Istanbul, Ishak Tepe stood as a candidate for the predominantly Kurdish party HADEP (People's Democracy Party) in the general elections of December 1995.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ferhat Tepe, the correspondent in Bitlis of the Kurdish-owned newspaper *Özgür Gündem* (Free Agenda), was abducted on 28 July 1993 and was subsequently seen by witnesses in police custody. His body, bearing torture marks, was found eight days later in a lake some 250 kilometres away. There were numerous security force checkpoints and roadblocks on the road between Bitlis and Lake Hazar where Ferhat Tepe's body was found and it was claimed that nobody could pass through them without the knowledge of the security forces. His murderers have never been brought to trial (see UA 255/93, EUR 44/76/93, 5 August 1993).

In August 1995, Safyettin Tepe died in police custody in Bitlis in suspicious circumstances. He had been detained on 22 August in the office in Batman of *Yeni Politika*, the newspaper he worked for, and was transferred to police headquarters in Bitlis, his home town, on 26 August. On 29 August his brothers were called to Bitlis Police Headquarters to collect his body. The police claimed that he had committed suicide by hanging himself from the bars of his cell door by his underwear. The family was ordered by the police to have the body buried quickly, and the funeral was held on the following day, 30 August. The family were refused access to an autopsy carried out by the local prosecutor and three doctors. The autopsy report does not firmly state the cause of death, but suggests that Safyettin Tepe died of asphyxia. The family has appealed for a second autopsy. Family members asked to talk to other prisoners who were in custody at the same time as Safyettin Tepe but were informed that no prisoners were being held.

Following Ferhat Tepe's death, Safyettin Tepe had worked as a reporter, initially for the Kurdish-owned newspaper *Özgür Ülke* (Free Land, successor to *Özgür Gündem*) in Adana and, after it was forced to close down on 3 February 1995, for its successor *Yeni Politika* (New Policy) which in turn was closed down on 16 August. *Yeni Politika* and its predecessors consistently reported human rights violations carried out in the southeast.

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

- expressing deep concern for the safety of Ishak Tepe, father of murdered Ferhat Tepe, detained in Bartın on 24 February 1996 and reportedly due to be transferred to Bitlis where his nephew Safyettin died in police custody in 1995;
- seeking assurances that he will not be subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- asking to be informed of the grounds for his detention.

APPEALS TO:

1. President Süleyman Demirel

Office of the President

Cumhurba_kanl____

06100 Ankara

Telegrams: Cumhurbaşkanlığı, Ankara, Turkey

Telex: 42303 kosk tr

Faxes: +90 312 468 5026

Salutation: Your Excellency

2. State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights:

Mr Adnan Ekmen

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Adnan Ekmen, Basbakanlık, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476; +90 312 420 5394

Salutation: Dear Minister

3. Deputy Prime Minister:

Mr Deniz Baykal

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Deniz Baykal, Basbakanlık, Ankara, Turkey

Telexes: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr; 42099 basb tr

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476; +90 312 419 1547

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

COPIES TO:

Interior Minister:

Mr Teoman Ünüsan

Ministry of Interior

_çi_leri Bakanl____

06644 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1795

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 April 1996.