

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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"Disappearance" / Fear of Torture

25 July 1995

TURKEY

Necat Altun, a Kurd from the province of Mardin
Hediye Altun, his daughter, aged 16

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Necat Altun and his daughter Hediye who have been in unacknowledged detention in Istanbul since 20 July 1995.

Amnesty International has received reports that officers of the Anti-Terror Branch came to the home of Necat Altun in the Ümraniye district of Istanbul on 20 July. They searched the house and took away some printed material and a weapon. They then detained Necat Altun and his 16-year-old daughter Hediye. In spite of all their efforts, the family has not been able to obtain confirmation of their detention nor any news of their present whereabouts. It is feared that the two detainees are being interrogated under torture at the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The persistence of torture is one of the major human rights problems in Turkey today. There were 29 reported deaths in custody due to torture in 1994, more than in any year since 1982. Most reports of torture come from the major cities of Istanbul, Ankara, Izmir, Adana and the ten provinces in the east and southeast, currently under State of Emergency legislation due to the continuing conflict between the security forces and armed members of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). The victims of torture come from all sectors of Turkish society and range from political activists held under the Anti-Terror Law to those held on suspicion of ordinary criminal offences including children.

Torture is used mainly in police and gendarmerie stations during the first days or weeks following detention. It is often applied to extract confessions, to elicit information about illegal organizations, to intimidate detainees into becoming police informers or as informal punishment for assumed support of illegal organizations.

People suspected of offences under the Anti-Terror Law can be held without access to family, friends or legal counsel for up to 30 days in the 10 provinces under State of Emergency, and for 15 days in the rest of Turkey. When not being interrogated, detainees are held in cramped, airless and insanitary conditions. With no access to the outside world they are at the mercy of their interrogators. Torture methods include being stripped naked and blindfolded, hosing with pressurized ice-cold water, hanging by the arms or wrists bound behind the victim's back, electric shocks, beating the soles of the feet, death threats and sexual assault.

Any person suspected of supporting the PKK is particularly at serious risk of torture, "disappearance" or extrajudicial execution. In 1994 there were more than 55 confirmed "disappearances", and more than 400 people were killed in unclarified circumstances.

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

- seeking confirmation of the detention of Necat Altun and his daughter Hediye and asking for information as to their place of detention;

- expressing concern for the safety of the two, who have been held since 20 July 1995 in unacknowledged detention, it is presumed at the Anti-Terror Branch of Istanbul Police Headquarters;
- seeking assurances that they are not being subjected to torture or any other form of ill-treatment;
- appealing for them to be granted access to their family and lawyer;
- asking to be informed of any charges brought against them.

APPEALS TO:

1) Chief Prosecutor at Istanbul State Security Court

Mr Ahmet Köksal

DGM Ba_savc_s_

Devlet Güvenlik Mahkemesi

Istanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: DGM Bassavcisi, Istanbul, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2) Istanbul Chief of Police

Mr Necdet Menzir

Istanbul Emniyet Müdürü

_stanbul, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Istanbul, Turkey

Telexes: 30811 IEHM TR; 30812 EMMH TR; 26177 IEMT TR

Salutation: Dear Sir

3) State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

Mr Algan Hacalo_lu

Office of the Prime Minister

Ba_bakanl_k

06573 Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 417 0476

Telegrams: Algan Hacalo_lu, Istanbul, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Minister

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 22 August 1995.