

PUBLIC

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12 November 2001

Further information on UA 19/01 (EUR 44/005/2001, 25 January 2001) - Fear for safety and new concern: arbitrary detention of children

TURKEY **S.Ö. (Full name known to Amnesty International) (f), aged 32**
New names: her six children

Eight police officers from Diyarbak_r are now on trial, charged with torturing the Kurdish woman S.Ö. Police have threatened her repeatedly to make her withdraw her complaint, and in the past few weeks they have detained several of her children and beaten some of them. All are in grave danger.

S.Ö. was arrested and reportedly raped and otherwise tortured at Diyarbak_r Police Headquarters in southeastern Turkey. She filed a formal complaint, and eight police officers went on trial in January 2001 at Diyarbak_r Heavy Penalty Court, charged with torturing, but not raping, S.Ö. Because she was afraid to travel to Diyarbak_r, on 2 April S.Ö. was allowed to give her statement regarding the torture to a court in Istanbul, where she was then living temporarily and where her lawyers are based.

Police officers are reportedly coming to S.Ö.'s house in Izmir and threaten her almost every week, and she is being followed on the streets. She has filed a formal complaint and asked for those responsible to be arrested.

Police reportedly detained and beat her 17-year old son F.Ö. a few months ago. They released him after three days when a member of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission and the Minister of the Interior intervened. In the second week of October they arrested her 12-year-old son C.Ö. at his elementary school, accusing him of theft. They beat him as they took him to a police station, and detained him again for three hours the following day.

A week later S.Ö. was called to Narl_dere Police Headquarters and asked to withdraw her complaint. When she refused, saying that those responsible should be brought to justice, a plainclothes police officer reportedly made indirect threats against her life and said "We hope nothing will happen to you".

On 22 October her 15-year old daughter B.Ö. was reportedly abducted by plainclothes people in a white car, who gagged and blindfolded her, took her to a hill near the city center and beat her. They apparently threatened to rape her and rape and kill her mother. After an hour they threw her out of the car. When S.Ö. and B.Ö. went to the local police station they were held there until 5am the following morning. The police asked how they knew that the people who abducted B.Ö. were police officers, and reportedly suggested that C.Ö. withdraw his statement about a police officer who beat him.

After her arrest in November 1997, S.Ö. had been imprisoned until 24 August 2000, convicted of aiding and abetting the armed opposition group Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK). Since her release from prison, she has been living in western Turkey, in Izmir and temporarily in Istanbul. Her husband has been in prison for six years.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rape and sexual assault by members of the security forces are regularly reported to Amnesty International. Both men and women are routinely stripped naked while detained incommunicado by the police or gendarmerie. Methods of sexual abuse reported include electric shocks and beating on the genitals and women's breasts, and rape. By October this year 146 women had sought the help of a legal aid project in Istanbul for women who had been sexually tortured by the security forces. The suspected perpetrators were overwhelmingly police officers, although allegations were also made against gendarmes, soldiers, and village guards. The perpetrators are rarely brought to justice. If trials

are opened, they linger on for years. Amnesty International has also received numerous reports of women who try to bring the alleged torturers to justice, their families and lawyers being harassed and threatened. Some victims of sexual torture and their lawyers have been put on trial themselves for making public statements about rape in custody.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English, German or your own language:

- expressing concern that police officers are reportedly threatening S.Ö. to force her to withdraw her complaint while the police officers accused of raping and torturing her are on trial;
- expressing concern that police and people in plain clothes have reportedly detained and beaten her children;
- asking the authorities to ensure that she and her family are protected from intimidation, attack and arbitrary detention;
- reminding the authorities that they ratified the UN Convention against Torture in 1988, and are obliged to bring alleged torturers to justice (Articles 4 and 5), and to protect victims, plaintiffs and witnesses in torture trials (Article 13);
- reminding the authorities that the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child has recently "noted with deep concern" that in Turkey "detention [of children] is not used as a measure of last resort and that there have been reported cases of children held incommunicado for long periods".

APPEALS TO:

Minister of the Interior

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Ministry of Interior

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Fax: + 90 312 418 17 95

Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Prof Hikmet Sami Türk

Ministry of Justice

Adalet Bakanl__

06659 Ankara, Turkey

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Faxes: + 90 312 417 3954 / 418 5667

Salutation: Dear Minister

Izmir Chief of Police:

Mr Halil Tata_

Izmir Emniyet Müdürü

Izmir, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Müdürü, Izmir, Turkey

Faxes: + 90 232 446 7515

COPIES TO:

State Minister with responsibility for Human Rights

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Office of the Prime Minister,

Ba_bakanl_k,

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Salutation: Dear Minister

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 24 December 2001.