

EXTERNAL

AI Index: EUR 44/97/95

UA 225/95 Fear of "disappearance" / Fear of torture

22 September 1995

TURKEY Hamza Güneri, aged 36

On 11 September 1995, plainclothes police came to the home of Hamza Güneri in A_r_, detained him in front of his wife and three children, and took him away.

On 12 September his sister-in-law Güvercin Güneri went to the Anti-Terror Branch of A_r_ Police Headquarters to make inquiries as to his whereabouts. His detention was then acknowledged.

However, on 15 September, police attached to the Anti-Terror Branch came to Hamza Güneri's home and told his family that he had escaped from custody. When the Human Rights Association branch in A_r_ inquired with the Anti-Terror Branch of A_r_ Police Headquarters, they were told the same thing.

Amnesty International is seriously concerned for Hamza Güneri's safety. His family, having had no news of him since his detention, fear that he has "disappeared" in police custody, given that an escape from Anti-Terror Branch custody is virtually unheard of.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

People suspected of offences under the Anti-Terror Law can be held in police custody 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.

Procedures laid down in the Turkish Criminal Procedure Code for the prompt and proper registration of detainees, and for notification of their families, are almost universally ignored. Lack of prompt registration and notification is not only extremely distressing for the families of detainees, but also creates the conditions in which "disappearances" and torture can occur.

Any person suspected of supporting the PKK or any other illegal armed organization is 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. At least 20 cases of "disappearance" in police custody have been reported in 1995 so far.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Hamza Güneri, detained in A_r_ on 11 September 1995 and whom the police allege escaped from custody at the Anti-Terror Branch of A_r_ Police Headquarters;
- expressing doubts into the alleged escape of Hamza Güneri;
- urging an immediate investigation into the incident;
- requesting to be informed of its findings.

APPEALS TO:

1. General Chief of Security:

Mr Mehmet A_ar

Emniyet Genel Müdürlü_ü

Bakanl_klar

Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Genel Muduru, Ankara, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

2. Minister of the Interior:

Mr Nahit Mente_e

Içisleri Bakanl____

Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Interior Minister, Ankara, Turkey

Faxes: +90 312 418 1066; 418 1795

Salutation: Dear Minister

3. State Prosecutor in A_r :

Cumhuriyet Savc_s_

Hükümet Kona__

A_r_, Turkey

Telegrams: Cumhuriyet Savcisi, Agri, Turkey

Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES 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 10 November 1995.