

PUBLIC

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Incommunicado detention / Fear for safety

22 June 2006

IRAQ

Metin Demir (m), 38, board member of *Özgür-Der*, Association for the Rights of Freedom of Thought and Education
Mustafa Egilli (m), journalist and board member of *Özgür-Der*
Hasip Yokus (m), member of *Özgür-Der*

Three Turkish citizens who are members of the Turkey-based non-governmental organisation *Özgür-Der*, Association for the Rights of Freedom of Thought and Education, are believed to be held incommunicado after they were detained by authorities in Kurdish-controlled Northern Iraq at or near the Turkish-Iraqi border crossing Habur/Ibrahim Halil (in Turkish/Iraqi respectively), which is located near Zakho, Iraq.

Metin Demir, who is a board member of the Diyarbakir branch of *Özgür-Der* and is married with three children, was reportedly detained around noon on 1 June by members of the Peshmerga, the primary security service of the Kurdish Regional Government. Metin Demir was travelling with two other members of *Özgür-Der* who saw him being taken away by members of the Peshmerga at the border crossing. Iraqi lawyers who inquired about Metin Demir's whereabouts on behalf of his family met with security officials of the Dohuk governorate, where the border crossing is located, on 7 June 2006. They reportedly denied having detained him, and his whereabouts remain unknown.

On 12 June, Mustafa Egilli, a journalist and board member of *Özgür-Der*, and Hasip Yokus, a member of *Özgür-Der*, entered Northern Iraq to investigate the whereabouts of Metin Demir. On 18 June 2006 at about 23.30, they reportedly called friends in Turkey informing them that they were near the Habur border crossing and expected to return to Turkey within the next hour. However, friends and relatives have not heard from them since this phone conversation, and they are now believed to be held by the authorities in Northern Iraq.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 1991 some areas of northern Iraq have been controlled by the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). These Kurdish-controlled areas enjoyed substantial autonomy even while Saddam Hussein was in power, and have continued to do so after the 30 January 2005 elections in Iraq for both the National Assembly and a Kurdish Assembly. PUK Secretary General Jalal Talabani was selected by the National Assembly as President of Iraq on 22 April, and KDP leader Mas'ud Barzani was selected by the Kurdish Assembly as President of the Kurdistan region.

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

- expressing concern that Metin Demir is being held incommunicado by the authorities in Northern Iraq;
- seeking clarification of the reasons for the detention of Metin Demir and requesting information about his whereabouts;
- calling for the immediate release of Metin Demir unless he is to be charged with an internationally recognizably criminal offence;
- expressing concern that Mustafa Egilli and Hasip Yokus may be held in incommunicado detention and requesting information of their current whereabouts;
- calling for the immediate release of Mustafa Egilli and Hasip Yokus, if they are detained, unless they are to be charged with an internationally recognizably criminal offence;

APPEALS TO:

Please send appeals via the Kurdish Regional Government offices abroad, asking for them to be forwarded to President Mas'ud Barzani:

The Kurdistan Regional Government in Erbil
Fax: +1 651 846 6051
Email: erbil@rp.krg.org

KRG Representation in CIS countries
Moscow, Russian Federation
Fax: +7 095 248 4450
Email: rus@rp.krg.org

KRG Representation in Austria
Vertretung der Regionalregierung Kurdistan-Irak
in Österreich
P.O. Box 49
A-1011 Vienna, Austria
Fax: +43 1 544 0305
Email: austria@rp.krg.org

KRG Mission to the European Union
rue de la loi 221
1040 Brussels
BELGIUM
Fax: +32 2 513 3679
Email: eu@rp.krg.org

KRG Representation in France
Fax: +33 1 42 65 1846
Email: france@rp.krg.org

KRG Representation in Germany
Vertretung der Regionalregierung-Kurdistan Irak
in Deutschland
P.O. Box 150 101
D-10633 Berlin, Germany
Fax: +49 30 7974 8492
Email: germany@rp.krg.org

KRG Representation in the Nordic Countries
Box 7127
SE-170 07 Solna
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Fax: +46 8 442 0905
Email: nordic@rp.krg.org

KRG Representation in Switzerland
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1420 Spring Hill Road, Suite 600
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Fax: +1 703 442 5316
Email: us@rp.krg.org

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P O Box 491 Liverpool
NSW 2170 Sydney
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Fax: +612 98 22 2276
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COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Iraq accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 July 2006.