

UA 262/90

Fear of Torture

2 June 1990

TURKEY: Muzaffer Tekeş
Güzel Ak
Ramazan Karaarslan
Ramazan Kahramaner
Sükrü Kahramaner
Aziz Karakaş
Mehmet Demirel
Mehmet Diren
Zeki Budak
Ahmet Ateşli
Seyfettin Dilekçe
Talip Nusral

and three others, names unknown

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Amnesty International is informed that during the night of 24 to 25 June 1990 some 15 people were detained in Diyarbakir and Silvan in southeastern Turkey. Their detention appears to be related to staff and readership of the political magazine Medya Güneşi (Sun of the Media). The magazine started publication in 1988 with special emphasis on the Kurdish question. Muzaffer Tekeş is the Diyarbakir representative of the journal. He was imprisoned between 1984 and 1987 for membership of the Progressive Democratic Cultural Association, DDKD, and Amnesty International adopted him as a prisoner of conscience.

The detainees named above and a further unnamed three are held incommunicado in Diyarbakir and there is fear that they might be tortured in order to extract a confession that they are members of an illegal organization. The exact location is not known, but could be either Diyarbakir Police Headquarters or the headquarters of the "anti-riot police" (çevik kuvvet) in Diyarbakir.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Turkey has a Kurdish ethnic minority estimated to be some 10 million people, which is not officially recognized by the authorities. The Kurdish population lives mainly in southeastern Turkey. Frequent allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been received from the region and the number of torture allegations increased substantially after the 1980 military coup. Since August 1984, when Kurdish guerrillas, members of the Kurdish Workers' Party, PKK, started armed attacks, an alarming number of reports of ill-treatment have come from the eastern and southeastern provinces, where some 2000 lives so far have been lost in the continuing fighting.

Turkey ratified the European Convention for the Prevention of Torture on 25 February 1988 and the UN Convention Against Torture on 2 August 1988. However, all information available to Amnesty International indicates that torture is still widespread and systematic in Turkey. Allegations of torture have continued since the transfer of power to a civilian government in 1983. Most allegations relate to ill-treatment of detainees in police custody during their initial interrogation when they are usually denied

access to relatives or a lawyer. Under current legislation the maximum detention period before being formally charged or released is 24 hours; in cases involving three or more suspects or due to the 'nature of the crime' it may be extended to 15 days. This period may be extended to 30 days in areas under emergency legislation or martial law. Emergency legislation is in force in Diyarbakir and nine other eastern provinces.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/faxes/telegrams/express letters/airmail letters:

- urging that the detainees named above are granted access to their families and lawyers and that they are not ill-treated while in detention;
- requesting to be informed of any charges against them.

APPEALS TO:

Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut
Office of the Prime Minister
Basbakanlik
Ankara, Turkey

Telegrams: Prime Minister, Ankara, Turkey
Telex: 44061/44062/44063 bbmt tr
42099 basb tr
42875 bbk tr
Fax: 90 41 17 04 76 PRIME MINISTER

Diyarbakir Emniyet Müdürü
Aydin Genç
Diyarbakir Chief of Police
Diyarbakir, Turkey

Telegrams: Emniyet Muduru, Diyarbakir, Turkey

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Turkey in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 July 1990.