



PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : TURKEY

Compilation of the information available in the Global IDP
Database of the Norwegian Refugee Council

(as of 24 August, 2001)

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PROFILE SUMMARY

The Kurdish minority is the main victim of internal displacement in Turkey, as a result of the conflict between Turkish security forces and Kurdish armed movements which raged in southeastern Turkey between 1984 and 1999 (UK Home Office April 2001). The most violent form of displacement was the evacuation of entire villages as carried out by the Turkish armed forces to deprive the Kurdish armed movements from logistical support from the civilian population. State authorities claim that 350,000 have been "evacuated" from about 3,500 villages between 1984 and 1999. Some local NGOs give the figure of 2 to 3 millions internally displaced persons because of the conflict, but these figures tend to include migrants who left impoverished rural areas in southeastern provinces for economic reasons (USCR 2001, U.S. DOS February 2001, COE June 1998). According to the US Department of State, the figure of one million internally displaced persons is a credible estimate for the total population who fled because of the violence prevailing in their home areas (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g). Since 1999, the level of violence has considerably decreased in southeastern Turkey but most of the displaced persons are still unable to return to their homes.

With a current population estimated at 16 million persons, Kurds constitute the largest ethnic minority in Turkey (26 percent of the total population). Since the origin of the Turkish Republic, the Kurds have been denied any rights as an ethnic minority, and manifestations of Kurdish identity have often been repressed brutally by Turkish authorities. In 1984, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) launched a guerilla warfare in southeastern Turkey to which the Turkish State responded with a violent counter-insurgency campaign (UK Home Office December 2001). The State of Emergency was declared in 10 provinces in 1987, implying a heavy military presence, martial law and other severe restrictions to civil and political rights enforced by a special Governor (Turkish Daily News 19 July 2001).

During the conflict, Turkish security forces exposed the civilian populations to numerous violations of human rights and humanitarian law, including arbitrary arrest, torture, extrajudicial killings, and indiscriminate attacks. Violations of humanitarian law were also attributed to the PKK, including arbitrary killings of civilians (AI 1 October 1996, U.S. DOS February 2001).

A major source of insecurity for the civilian population in southeastern Turkey has been the "village guard" system, created by the Turkish authorities. These paramilitary militias comprise villagers which have been pressured to join, exposing them to retaliation from both sides. Village guards and their families have been the target of deliberate and arbitrary killing by the PKK, while the refusal of villagers to join the guard has often followed by the evacuation of their villages by the Turkish security forces (UK Home Office April 2001, U.S. DOS February 2001, HRW November 1995). Evacuations have been carried out in the most brutal way, with reports of property destruction, rape, torture and degrading treatments and extra-judicial executions by the security forces. Emergency

shelters have been provided to the evacuated villagers in extremely rare cases (USCR 1999, COE 3 June 1998).

The forced evacuation of villages and the violence of the armed conflict has left the civilians no other choice than to move to the nearest provincial capitals, such as Diyarbakir and Batman, which have seen their populations double during the Kurdish conflict (Kirisici June 1998). While some of the displaced have found accommodation with extended family members, most gathered in slums in the outskirts of these cities. Housing programmes have been so far insufficient to address the needs of the Kurdish population in southeastern Turkey (USCR 1999, HRW June 1996). Kurds in urban areas remain under close police surveillance and remain exposed to risks of arbitrary detention, torture and disappearance (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey March 2001, UK Home Office April 2001, U.S. DOS February 2001).

The situation of the displaced is further aggravated by the disastrous economic conditions prevailing in southeastern provinces. The whole region has always suffered from a lower level of social and economic development than the rest of the country, with up to 60 percent of its population below the poverty rate (Turkish Daily News 15 July 2001, COE 3 June 1998). NGO reports confirm that displaced Kurdish households cannot afford to send their children to school and that an increasing number of displaced children in urban areas are trying to make their living in the street (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey March 2001, Turkish Daily News 7 August 2001). The psychosocial status of the displaced women is also an issue of grave concern to local NGOs. Coming from a traditional rural background, they suffer from isolation and lack of hope in their new urban environment. High level of suicide among displaced women has been reported in the region (Turkish Daily News 5 April 2001 & 13 March 2001).

A significant proportion of the displaced have left the southeastern region altogether and moved further to western Turkey in search of a safer environment and better economic conditions. They have been part of larger migratory movement from southeastern Turkey which has significantly modified the distribution of the Kurdish population in Turkey, with a majority now living outside eastern and southeastern provinces (USCR 1999, UK Home Office April 2001, COE 13 June 2001). Displaced households have found some support from Kurdish migrants who settled in western cities such as Ankara, Istanbul or Izmir, in particular for lodging and employment. However, human rights NGOs consider that big cities outside the conflict zone do not offer safe conditions for displaced Kurds. While some segments of the Kurdish population has successfully integrated into the Turkish population, a lot of displaced Kurdish households live in slums around the cities and remain exposed to constant risks of mistreatment by security forces. Numerous displaced Kurds reportedly prefer not to register with the authorities in localities where they resettle in order to avoid any contacts with the police. Deprived of valid ID documents, the displaced have no access to social services. Discrimination against the Kurds on the labour market is also widespread (Atreya, McDowall, Ozbolat February 2001).

Since the arrest of the PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in June 1999 and his appeal for a unilateral cessation of armed activities by the Kurdish armed groups, the level of violence in southeastern Turkey has significantly decreased. The state of emergency remains currently in force only in four initial provinces (COE 3 June 2001). However, the conditions for the large scale return of the Kurdish displaced to their villages have not been fulfilled yet. Local human rights NGOs call in particular for the abolition of the village guards as a condition for the restoration of security in the villages. They also demand more reconstruction aid from the State, in particular to grant better compensation for lost properties and to ensure the availability of social infrastructure and services (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey 31 May 2001; Atreya, McDowall, Ozbolat. February 2001). Highly dependent on agricultural resources, a significant proportion of Kurdish households have been reportedly unable to access any land to cultivate, as authorities have failed to address the issue of landmines, the occupation of land by village guards and the more global problem of highly unequal distribution of land property. There have also been reports that households applying for return assistance have been pressured by authorities to give up beforehand any claims on compensation for the loss of their properties (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey January 2001).

Return programmes developed by national authorities have been inadequate to respond to the needs of the displaced. Initiated in 1994, the resettlement of evacuated villages or hamlets into newly built "central villages" has not had any significant impact. The displaced have been largely reluctant to move to the new settlements which have been built without consultation with them. One year later, the government also launched the "return to the villages" project, providing for reconstruction help to the returning households. Only a few villagers have been given the permission by the provincial governors to return to their homes and "authorised" returnees have often not been allowed to enter their villages by the military locally (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey February 2001, USCR 1999, HRW June 1996).

The government has developed a more global plan for the economic revitalisation of southeastern Turkey, the "South-eastern Anatolia Project" (GAP). The most visible component of the project is the construction of hydroelectric plans and irrigation schemes in the region (USCR 1999). NGO observers question however the real impact on the region and deplore the displacement of population triggered by the construction of dams and the poor implementation of resettlement programmes (KHRP September 2000). The compensation for expropriated land in the case of planned construction of the Ilisu dam (Southeastern Anatolia) may be further complicated as many of the owners have already left the area because of the conflict (ECDG 22 December 2000).

The response of the government to the plight of the displaced and to the Kurdish issue in general has been under the scrutiny of some Turkish media, intellectuals and human rights groups despite the risk of prosecution by the State for "advocacy of hatred and violence" or "separatist" statements (HRW 2000, USCR 1999). The Turkish Parliament also created ad hoc temporary committees in 1994 and 1997 to investigate the state's action in the conflict zone (HRW June 1996, Turkish Daily News 30 January 2001) and clearly identified the State's responsibility for the population displacements. Kurdish

political parties and media have been constantly subject to harassment by the authorities but a variety of Kurdish self-help groups have been active in providing assistance to the displaced (Kirisci June 1998).

The Turkish Government long hampered any attempt by the international community to monitor the situation of the Kurdish minority in Turkey. Most international humanitarian organisations, including the ICRC, have been refused access to southeastern provinces, while human rights organisations can only operate under close police surveillance. The Turkish State was long reluctant to issue any invitation to UN rapporteurs of the Commission for Human Rights. Since 1996, most of them have been finally invited to visit Turkey, including the UN Representative on Internally Displaced Persons, whose mission to Turkey is scheduled to take place in the fall 2001 (UNCHR 17 January 2001, USCR 1999). The OSCE High Commissioner for National Minorities has excluded Turkey from his mandate because of the terrorist context (USCR 1999). Institutions of the Council of Europe such as the Parliamentary Assembly and the Council of Ministers have adopted several resolutions condemning Turkey's human rights violations against the Kurdish minority (COE 3 June 2001, USCR 1999). The European Court of Human Rights receives an increasing number of applications lodged by Turkish Kurds against the Turkish State. The Court has already found Turkey responsible for violations of the European Human Rights Conventions in numerous cases of arbitrary evictions, property destruction, disappearances and torture and has compelled the State to pay substantive compensations to the victims (KHRP 31 January 2001).

Turkey's candidacy for membership in the European Union has pressured the country to display some progress in human rights issues and the treatment of minorities. In 2000, national authorities in particular released an ambitious plan of return for a better protection of human rights but failed to indicate any precise timeline for implementation. The November 2000 EU draft partnership agreement with Turkey does not address the issue of internal displacement (IHF 2000, KHRP September 2000).

(August 2001)

CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

Background

The Kurds: history and profile

- Kurds constitute the largest minority ethnic group in Turkey but there are no accurate figures available
- They are traditionally organised in tribes with pastoral or agricultural activities
- Kurds do not represent a cohesive ethnic minority and range from persons tranquilly integrated in the larger society through political activists to committed terrorists
- Kurds were not formally acknowledged as minorities under the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne
- Atatürk's secular state brutally prohibited any manifestation of Kurdish identity, including through mass killings and deportation (1925-1938)
- Nationalist ideas within Kurdish society reappeared in intellectual circles in the 1950s
- During the 1970s many Kurds were attracted to the leftist revolutionary socialist groups and then created specifically Kurdish nationalist groups to challenge State denial
- The most successful of these was the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which steadily widened its sphere of influence during the 1980s

"Who are the Kurds?"

The Kurds are the descendants of Indo-European tribes who settled among the inhabitants of the Zagros mountains in various epochs, but probably mainly during the second millennium BC. The first mention of Kurds, as 'Cyrtii', occurred in the second century BC. At the time of the Arab conquest in the seventh century AD, the term 'Kurd' was used to denote nomadic people.

The Kurds today, numbering at least 26 million, struggle to obtain political recognition and rights as national communities within the state boundaries in which they find themselves. They form the largest ethnic community in the Middle East without a state of its own.

Population estimates (1993)*

Country	Total population	Kurds	%
Iran	61,000,000	6,100,000	10%
Iraq	19,300,000	4,400,000	23%
Syria	13,400,000	1,100,000	8%
Turkey	60,000,000	13,200,000	22%
Former Soviet Union		500,000	

Elsewhere		700,000	
Total		26,000,000	

(*Estimates are in rounded figures.)

Where do the Kurds live?

Although Kurds are to be found in Syria, the Caucasian republics of Armenia and Azerbaijan, Khorasan (in eastern Iran), and in Lebanon, the main concentration lives today where the Kurdish people have always lived - in the mountains where Iran, Iraq and Turkey meet. The heart of this area consists of the extremely rugged mountains of the Zagros range, running in ridges north-west to south-east. In the west these mountain folds give way to rolling hills, and to the Mesopotamian plain. To the north the mountains slowly turn to steppe-like plateau and the highlands of Anatolia. To the east the mountains fall away to lowlands onto which the Kurds have also spread.

Although the population is not exclusively Kurdish in much of this area, the dominant culture is Kurdish. From the early thirteenth century onwards much of this area has been called Kurdistan, although it was not until the sixteenth century, after the Kurds had moved north and west onto the Anatolian plateau, that the term Kurdistan came into common usage to denote a system of Kurdish fiefs. Since then, although the term Kurdistan appears on few maps, it is clearly more than a geographical term since it also refers to a human culture which exists in that land.

Nevertheless no map of Kurdistan can be drawn without contention, and for this reason the demographic map is not a political statement, but a statement of where large numbers of Kurds are found." (MRG 2001)

"In 1989 the average gross reproduction rate in the predominantly Kurdish provinces was 2.75 per cent, compared with that in the predominantly Turkish regions of the Republic of 1.49 per cent. Fifty per cent of the Kurdish population is under the age of 15 compared with only 35 per cent of Turks. Whereas Kurds probably constituted 19 per cent of the population in 1975, today they almost certainly constitute approximately 24 per cent." (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, p. 1000)

"Estimates of the number of Kurds in Turkey vary considerably; there may be 12 - 15 million Kurds in Turkey out of a total population of 64.4 million, making Kurds the largest minority ethnic group in Turkey. The Kurdish birth rate is high and the proportion of Kurds in the national population of Turkey is likely to increase.

In the 19th century most Kurds were tribal pastoralists, but a significant minority were peasantry. Religious feeling tended to be very strong among the Kurdish tribes, with devotion to particular local religious leaders who belonged to the brotherhoods of "folk-Islam". These leaders quite often became tribal chiefs in their own right, with secular as well as religious authority. At the end of the 19th century thinkers among the different

ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire began to think of themselves for the first time in ethnic terms. Both the Arabs and Turks evolved ideas of ethnic nationhood, but such ideas were slower to develop within Kurdish society, which remained fragmented and tribal.

Many Kurdish tribes supported Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk)'s war of independence in the expectation that they were repelling the infidel (Greeks, Armenians, and the Allies) to re-establish the Muslim Fatherland with its Sultan/Caliph. But Atatürk established an ethnic definition of the new Republic as "Turkish, secular and modern", and he set about suppressing all manifestations that contradicted that aim: tribal life, Kurdish language and culture, and the religious brotherhoods that were so strong in the Kurdish region. From 1925 to 1938 the Turkish Government ruthlessly suppressed Kurdish rebellions and resistance to the enforcement of this new ideology which denied their identity. Kurdish leaders tended to appeal to nationalist ideas, the rank and file probably simply wanted their old way of life back. Atatürk's measures involved mass killings, village destruction, and the forced deportation of hundreds of thousands of Kurds.

By the 1950s it seemed as if the Kurds had finally been hammered into Turks. The end of one party politics in the 1940s led the new opposition to woo the old tribal chiefs and the new landlord class in the Kurdish region to deliver the peasant vote. This became a key feature of Turkish electoral politics. The landlord class benefited in material ways and obeyed the State ideology. It was young middle class intellectuals in the 1950s who reawakened nationalist ideas within Kurdish society, challenging the State's view that Kurds were mountain Turks. (Kurdish is a member of the Iranian branch of the Indo-European family of languages. Kurds have no ethnic connection with Turks, whose language is a member of the Altaic family).

During the 1970s many Kurds were attracted to the leftist revolutionary socialist groups which soon found themselves in armed conflict against right wing groups that frequently enjoyed the tacit support of the State. Counter insurgency operations routinely involved human rights violations against villagers in affected areas. With these disorders proliferating, the army intervened in September 1980. It is estimated that during the three years of military government probably over 100,000 Kurds were detained by the security forces. Many were tortured.

Many Kurds became disillusioned with Turkish leftist movements in the 1970s, and started to form specifically Kurdish nationalist groups to challenge State denial and repression. The most successful of these was the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which was given substantial help and facilities by Syria. The PKK matched Turkish Government ruthlessness, killing pro-government villagers and their families and also Turkish civil servants in rural areas, most notably teachers, who were suspected of being government informants. Thus both sides routinely violated the rules of war and other legal instruments for the protection of basic rights.

During the 1980s the PKK steadily widened its sphere of influence. Most Kurds were initially hostile to the PKK and hated its methods. But they had little time for a

government that denied their identity and rights. When government forces made them choose sides, large numbers started to support the PKK, despite misgivings over its methods. Many were not interested in, or did not know about, its atrocities. They saw government atrocities on a far more widespread scale, and saw the PKK as defending the Kurdish corner.

[...]

Kurds do not represent a cohesive ethnic minority and range from persons tranquilly integrated in the larger society through political activists to committed terrorists. A significant number of historically ethnic Kurds have been completely assimilated into Turkish society and no longer even speak Kurdish." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 6.1-6.10)

The Kurdish conflict (1984-1999)

- Kurdish insurgency reappeared suddenly by 1984 in the form of the PKK, mainly in southeastern Turkey
- In July 1987, ten provinces in the southeast were placed under emergency rule due to an increased level of fighting
- The conflict led to the displacement of Kurds from exposed villages, forcible evacuation and the destruction of villages
- The arrest of Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader in 1999 and his appeal for a cease-fire was followed by a considerable reduction of violence in southeastern Turkey

"On 12 September 1980 the armed forces, led by General Kenan Evren, Chief of the General Staff, seized power in a bloodless coup. Martial law was declared throughout the country and the new government succeeded in reducing the level of political violence and in restoring law and order, but at the expense of compromising or suspending many democratic freedoms. A new Constitution was adopted in 1982." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 3.3)

"Four years after the 12 September 1980 coup, which crushed the activities of urban insurgents and fundamentalists, Turkey faced a different threat from a similar source - rural insurgency, initially concentrated in the south east region along the borders with Iran, Iraq and Syria. Almost all the rural insurgent groups had their origins in the student groups based in the cities, one particular case in point being Abdullah Öcalan's PKK (Kurdistan Workers' Party). The separatist activities soon spread to the cities.

Following the coup, there was a sharp decline in the number of insurgent acts and resulting deaths. Official statistics showed a 70% decline in ordinary crimes while the number of political murders decreased by 82%. This downward trend continued in the three years following the coup, suggesting that the insurgent threat had been crushed. After 1983 there was a strong belief that the insurgent organisations would never come back to the Turkish scene. However, by 1984, this opinion proved baseless when insurgency (in the form of the PKK) resurrected suddenly. Instead of a resumption of

armed activities in Turkey's main cities, the emphasis was on attacks concentrated in the south east.

In July 1987, ten provinces in the southeast were placed under emergency rule due to an increased level of fighting; Van, Bitlis, Tunceli, Diyarbakir, Siirt, Bingol, Batman, Hakkari, Sirnak, Mardin. The state of emergency was lifted in Mardin in November 1996, in Batman, Bingol and Bitlis in October 1997, in Siirt in November 1999, and in Van in July 2000. It continues in Diyarbakir, Hakkâri, Sirnak, and Tunceli provinces.

In a speech in December 1998, President Demirel stated that, since 1984, 23,638 PKK members, 5,555 security force members, and 5,302 civilians had lost their lives in the fighting between the security forces and the PKK, which fought, initially, for Kurdish self-rule in the southeast. The conflict has led to the migration of Kurds from exposed villages to district and provincial centres, or out of the southeast altogether. Forcible evacuations by the Turkish security forces are reported to have led to the destruction of 3500 villages in the region and the displacement of between 330,000 and 3 million people. As so many villages have now been evacuated and because the fighting has now moved to the mountains, the rate of evacuations has decreased in recent years, with 30 villages being evacuated in 1998. The Human Rights Association states that, as of October 2000, no village clearances took place during the year.

The situation in the southeast was reported to be calmer in 1998 than in previous years. In September 1998, rapporteurs from the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly said the region had started a process of 'normalization' in comparison to their last visit there. Since the PKK ceasefire in August 1999, there has, as of October 2000, been a 90% reduction in violence in the south-east.

In October 1998 the PKK's leader, Abdullah Öcalan, was expelled from Syria. Following his expulsion he unsuccessfully attempted to claim asylum in several European countries before being apprehended in Kenya and flown to Turkey. He was tried and convicted of treason and sentenced to death. After his sentencing he instructed PKK fighters to withdraw from Turkey, and a Turkish general confirmed that this was actually happening." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 4.23-4.28)

"In 1999 Abdullah Öcalan, the PKK leader, was captured and brought to trial by a Turkish court. In June he was found guilty of treason, and was sentenced to death. In early August the PKK indicated its willingness to comply with Öcalan's request for a cease-fire in south-eastern Turkey. On 12 January 2000 the Turkish Government agreed to respect an injunction from the European Court of Human Rights calling for the suspension of Öcalan's execution, pending his appeal to the Court. In a written statement from prison, Öcalan said that the Government's decision was a step towards democracy. He pledged that the PKK would not exploit the move, and said that he now believed that the PKK's war for a Kurdish state was a 'historic mistake'. A ruling from the ECHR could take up to two years from January 2000." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 6.8-6.9)

Significant decline of fighting following jailed PKK leader Ocalan's call for ending the armed struggle (1999-2001)

- There are still reports of some clashes between security forces and PKK groups withdrawing to Northern Iraq
- PKK attacks against civilians and law enforcement personnel has virtually ended

"In 1999 the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) declared that it would abandon armed activities in Turkey, thus reducing the armed turbulence, particularly in the southeast, although some units of the PKK continued sporadic attacks, and there were some clashes between security forces and PKK groups withdrawing to Northern Iraq. Other illegal organizations, including the Workers and Peasants' Army of Turkey (TIKKO), the Islamic Raiders of the Big East-Front (IBDA-C) and the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (DHKP/C), continued their armed activities. Nevertheless, the number of clashes diminished considerably. The Anatolia New Agency reported in May [2000] that armed incidents had decreased from 3,300 in 1994, to 1,436 in 1995, to 488 in 1999, to eighteen in the first five months of 2000." (HRW 2000, p. 326)

"During the year [2000], Turkish ground forces with air support conducted several operations in northern Iraq against the PKK. The Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan cooperated with the Turkish Government in shutting down certain PKK facilities in northern Iraq. Turkish government policy is to target only PKK fighters in northern Iraq; however, Turkish planes accidentally killed 38 civilians in Sedakan, northern Iraq, during an operation in August against the PKK. The Government is taking steps to compensate the victims' families. At the end of the year, an operation against the PKK involving hundreds of Turkish soldiers continued in northern Iraq, according to press reports.

In February [2000] Parliament renewed legislation allowing members of terrorist organizations (and criminal gangs) to apply for amnesty or reductions in sentences, if they provide useful information that helps lead to the dissolution of the organization. Government figures are not available for the number of persons who applied for the amnesty, but human rights attorneys speculate that the number is above 2,500. According to press reports, many applicants, including some who were members of Turkish Hizbullah, have obtained sentence reductions or release.

The PKK remained almost completely inactive during the year. There were reports of internal divisions over jailed PKK leader Ocalan's call for ending the armed struggle, but by year's end no rival faction appeared to have gained control of the group. Apparently on orders from the PKK leadership, several groups of 8 to 10 former militants turned themselves in to the authorities, asking for amnesty. They are all currently standing trial for charges relating to membership in the PKK. Although PKK attacks against civilians and law enforcement personnel in the southeast have virtually ended, the military did engage the PKK, killing several alleged terrorists. Government authorities acknowledge that the level of violent conflict is considerably lower than in the past and that the main

reason is an absence of PKK activity and the fact that the security forces were able to effectively end Hizbullah operations.

Other terrorist organizations, most notably DHKP-C, conducted attacks mainly against police targets." (U.S.DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

"An armed clash broke out in the region between Kulp and Lice districts of Diyarbakir and Genç district of Bingöl on 13 and 14 April. 5 soldiers named nder Altay, Abdülkadir Kocatürk, Turgay Türmen, Kadir Altnöz and Kamil ngör lost their lives and another two were injured. The Emergency State Region Governor Office claimed that 9 PKK militants had lost their lives, whereas PKK declared 2 militants and 7 soldiers died, and 1 Militant had been caught.

In a statement the Emergency State Region Governor Office, alleged that 4 PKK militants died in the armed clash broke out on 24-25 April in the vicinity of Hakkari." (Human Rights Foundation in Turkey April 2001, sect. 3.10)

"According to the information given by the PKK through daily zgür Politika on 7 May, 5 soldiers lost their lives during the operations deployed by the Turkish Armed Forces in Sirnak between 26 April and 3 May.

According to the information given by the Governor of the Emergency State Region, 200 PKK militants lost their lives during the operations started in Bingöl as of 21 May. Reports on the casualties stated that zgen Bingöl was among the victims." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey May 2001, sect. 3.10)

State of emergency in southeastern Turkey: severe restriction of human rights (1987-2001)

- The state of emergency was originally declared in 8 provinces in southeastern Turkey in 1987
- It is currently in force in four provinces (April 2001)
- It implies military presence, martial law, maintenance of the village guard system and other restrictions to normal economic and social life.
- The emergency region governor has sweeping powers to restrict exercise of civil and political rights

"The state of emergency called Emergency Rule (OHAL) introduced on Jul. 19, 1987 is now into its 15th year, the Anatolia news agency reported yesterday. At first, martial law had been introduced into certain provinces in East and Southeast Anatolia on Jul. 12, 1980 because of escalating terrorist action, but was upgraded to OHAL in 1987 when separatist terrorists began mounting bloody attacks in eight provinces. OHAL has been extended 42 time since being declared by the late President Turgut Ozal.

The first provinces to be covered by OHAL were Bingöl, Diyarbakir, Elazig, Hakkari, Mardin, Siirt, Tunceli and Van. The provinces of Adiyaman, Bitlis and Mus became

covered by the definition 'neighboring provinces'. Later on Adiyaman, Bitlis, Batman and Sirnak were to be covered by OHAL's scope. At its height, OHAL covered 13 provinces, but with the reduction in the terrorist threat, only four provinces: Diyarbakir, Sirnak, Hakkari and Tunceli are still covered.

The OHAL region has been run by six 'super' governors with special powers above and beyond those of regular provincial governors. One governor, Aydin Arslan, died in office in 1999. The current OHAL Governor is Gokhan Aydiner.

To date, some 29,712 Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) separatist terrorists have been caught or killed or have surrendered within the boundaries of OHAL. A total of 1,117 village guards and 5,040 security forces personnel have been martyred as a result of terrorist activity within OHAL." (Turkish Daily News 19 July 2001)

"The Turkish authorities do not envisage lifting the state of emergency (which Parliament on 27 March 2001 prolonged for 4 months in 4 provinces [Endnote 22]) because they fear that the PKK militants would immediately return. This state of emergency implies military presence in full operation [endnote 23], martial law, maintenance of the village guard system [Endnote 24], regular roadblock, curfews, identity controls and many other impediments of a normal economic and social life. No wonder that the inhabitants want this state of emergency to be lifted as soon as possible. The Turkish authorities recalled that the source of the present difficulties of the region is the security problem resulting from the PKK terror since the 1980's rather than the present state of emergency. Should the decline of the PKK terror prove to be permanent, the state of emergency will also be abolished in the remaining four provinces. "

[Endnote 22: Tunceli, Diyarbakir, Hakkari and Sirnak]

[Endnote 23: During their trip to Sirnak the co-rapporteurs did not see any potentially strategic mountain pass or hilltop without the presence of security forces.]

[Endnote 24: in March 2000, the number of village guards was said to be 65,000, with about 335 000 - 400 000 family members, who are paid by the State.]
(COE 13 June 2001, para. 141)

"In accordance with article 120 of the Constitution, the Council of Ministers, meeting under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic and after consultation with the National Security Council, may declare a state of emergency in one or more regions or throughout the country in the event of serious indications of widespread acts of violence aimed at the destruction of the free democratic order or of fundamental rights and freedoms, or serious deterioration of public order. The state of emergency is declared for a period not exceeding six months. This decision shall be submitted immediately to the Turkish Grand National Assembly, which may extend the period for a maximum of four months each time." (UNCHR 28 December 1998, para. 14)

"Under the 1983 State of Emergency Law and supplementary decrees, the emergency region governor had sweeping powers to move populations, confiscate publications and limit the right of assembly. Maximum police detention periods could be extended from

seven to ten days within the emergency region. The governor's extraordinary powers were still regularly exercised in 2000. For example, in May, the emergency region governor banned the distribution of twelve journals. Rights to compensation for acts carried out by the emergency region governor were limited, and there was no judicial review of such actions." (IHF 2001, p. 303)

Another armed group in southeastern Turkey: the Hizbullah

- In the early 1998, radical Islamist group launched campaign of violence against the PKK

"In January 2000 Turkey was shocked by the discovery of a series of gruesome murders which revealed to the public the scope and brutality of a particularly shadowy Islamist group. Hezbollah/Hizbullah, which had originated in the 1980s in the south-east of the country. In the early 1990s Hezbollah came to prominence as a radical Islamist group after it launched a campaign of violence against the PKK. At the time rumours were rife that Hezbollah was at least tolerated by the security forces because it was fighting against a common enemy. President Demirel denied allegations that there were links between Hezbollah and Turkish officialdom, while the general staff of the armed forces issued an angry statement condemning such allegations as slander." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 4.29)

Unfavourable economic context (2001)

- Since 1994, Turkish economy has suffered under high inflation which is still of about 50 percent in 1999
- The August 1999 earthquake severely affected production in some parts of the country and resulted in a negative growth rate
- In December 1999, Turkey signed an agreement with the International Monetary Fund, providing for significant reductions of public expenditures
- 40% of the population still work in the agricultural sector, mainly in underdeveloped Eastern Turkey

"The Turkish economic climate has been uneven in recent years. Unsustainable high economic growth in 1993 came to a dramatic end at the beginning of 1994 when a draining of international confidence triggered a sharp devaluation of the Turkish lira as inflation rose sharply. A tough new economic package restored some confidence but the crisis and its aftermath had a severe effect on the real economy. 1995 and 1996 generally saw a gradual improvement through successful short-term action. Growth and revenue remain high but the annual rate of inflation for 1997 of close to 100% and a dramatically widening trade gap, high interest rates and huge debt repayments continue to cause concern. The annual inflation rate had eased by mid 1999, but was still more than 50%. In mid-1999 a growth rate of the economy of 0.5% was predicted for that year, although the major earthquake in August [1999], which severely affected production in some parts of the country, seemed likely to result in a growth rate of minus 2.5%. Early estimates of the

cost of the earthquake to the Turkish economy ranged from \$5000m., over a period of 18 months, to as much as five times that amount. In December 1999 Turkey signed an important Standby Agreement with the International Monetary Fund, setting tough inflation and interest rate targets. In April 2000 the Government announced plans to introduce a new lira (equivalent to 1 million of the present units) from 2001 as part of its anti-inflationary measures, which also envisaged a reduction in inflation to 25% in 2000." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 3.32)

"Under the terms of the IMF loan, the Turkish government pledged to bring down its budget deficit - which exceeded 10% of the country's economic output in 1999 - by half, and to cut inflation from 70% to 25%.

It also agreed to a string of privatisations, a reduction in subsidies, especially to the agricultural sector, and a partially fixed exchange rate.

In broad terms the reforms had seemed to be working, with the budget deficit declining as the economy shifted into recovery, and inflation and interest rates dropping sharply.

Unemployment, however, has continued to rise, and is now at about 8% of the workforce." (BBC 5 December 2000)

"2001 February - [...] The Turkish lira loses more than a third of its value against the US dollar as foreign investors pull out over fears of a government collapse. The panic arose after President Sezer had allegedly accused Prime Minister Ecevit of tolerating corruption.

2001 March - Thousands of people demonstrate against an IMF-backed austerity plan, designed to tackle Turkey's fiscal crisis." (BBC 3 April 2001)

"In some ways, Turkey's high inflation is also a symptom of a deeper economic imbalance.

The country is still split between a relatively modern urban sector and a much less developed rural sector in Eastern Turkey.

More than 40% of the population still work in agriculture, although it provides only 14% of GDP.

And the infrastructure in rural areas is poor, and there are low levels of education, especially among women.

Nearly a third of school age children work rather than attend classes, according to OECD figures." (BBC 5 December 2000)

Conflict-related causes

Up to 3500 villages in southeastern Turkey have been forcibly evacuated, mostly by the Turkish army (1984-1999)

- The authorities' objective was to deprive the PKK of any logistical support
- The evacuation of villages often took place following the refusal of villagers to join the village guard system
- Evacuations were carried out with extreme brutality, with reports of severe human rights violations, such as rape, property destruction, beatings and extrajudicial executions
- The responsibility of the Turkish authorities for the evacuation of most villages has been confirmed by national and international institutions
- The majority of villages and hamlets in the region were forcibly emptied between 1993 and 1995
- The rate of evacuations decreased considerably in recent years

"The Government's states purposes for the evacuations were to protect civilians or prevent PKK guerrillas from obtaining logistical support from the inhabitants. Villagers and other observers alleged that the security forces evacuated them for refusing to participate in the paramilitary village guard program." (U.S. DOS 26 February 2000, sect. 1g)

"The evacuation of villages refusing to join the village guard system is carried out by the army with extreme brutality and no civilian supervision. It is frequently accompanied by the destruction of property and further violation of human rights such as sexual assault and humiliation, beatings and extrajudicial executions.

The Turkish authorities until recently have denied responsibility for these operations, claiming that the PKK was to blame for the destruction of villages and that individuals had left voluntarily, or under pressure from the PKK. However the complicity of the Turkish authorities was confirmed in two recent rulings of the European Court of Human Rights: on 16 September 1996 in the case of Akdivar and others vs Turkey, and on 28 November 1997 in the case of Menten and others vs Turkey, in which Turkish security forces were found guilty of burning houses in villages in south-eastern Turkey, causing the villagers to flee.

Undoubtedly, the PKK has some responsibility for the burning of villages, in particular those run by village guards or refusing to support the PKK. [...]

However, the responsibility of both parties, the PKK on the one hand, and the Turkish armed forces on the other, should be viewed in appropriate proportions. In the Rapporteur's opinion the Turkish authorities bear more blame for the uncontrolled escalation of violence in the region, first because the provocative nature of their suppression of the rights of the Kurdish minority lies at the origin of the conflict, and secondly because they have at their disposal the whole machinery of the state, which they use abusively against the Kurdish population in the region.

A step towards the clarification of this important question has been undertaken by the Turkish Parliament. At the request of one of its members, Mr Algan Hacaloglu of the Republican People's Party (CHP), a former state minister for human rights, the Turkish Parliament set up a Committee on Migration in 1997 to investigate the causes of displacement and to provide aid to the displaced.

On 28 July 1997, the Chairman of this Committee, Mr Seyit Hasim Hasimi, held a press conference in Diyarbakir. He announced that forced evacuation of villages and hamlets by the Turkish armed forces in the region had resulted in large numbers of displaced people and potential refugees. He confirmed that 364 742 inhabitants of 3 185 villages and hamlets had been forced out since 1990 in the framework of the fight against terrorism. These figures were publicly confirmed later by Mr Bülent Ecevit, Deputy Prime Minister, who said that the villages had been emptied 'for security reasons'. The US State Department cited 560 000 as 'a credible estimate' of the number of people deprived of their homes as a result of the evacuations." (COE 3 June 1998, paras. 8-17)

"Independent observers confirm that most displacement in the 1990s has been caused by government army and security forces, including the village guards. In its 1994 report, Turkey: Forced Displacement of Ethnic Kurds from Southeastern Turkey, Human Rights Watch concludes, 'According to our research, the vast majority of those displaced in south-eastern Turkey is largely the result of actions by Turkish security forces. Forced displacement usually comes as collective punishment for refusal to join the village guard system or for supporting the PKK, usually for giving food and a place to sleep (yardim ve yataklik), or for suspicion of committing such acts'. The U.S. Department of State has reached the same conclusion, characterizing forced displacement as a 'systematic process of evacuating and often burning villages throughout the southeast. The scale of evacuations and their continuance suggest that they are part of the Government of Turkey strategy designed to deprive the PKK of any logistical base in the southeast.'" (USCR 1999, pp. 13-16)

"From 1997 the rate of evacuation declined. By 1999 most human rights organisations reckoned there were in excess of 3500 villages evacuated and between 2.5 and 3 million people rendered homeless. These were not confined to the State of Emergency provinces; neighbouring provinces such as K. Maras, Sivas, Erzurum and Kangol were also affected." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 6.8)

"According to Human Rights Watch the majority of villages and hamlets in the region were forcibly emptied between 1993 and 1995. After that the large-scale evacuations ceased, but smaller operations by the Turkish armed forces continued in 1996 and 1997. The most probable reason for the lower rate of evacuations is that there are now very few 'frontline' villages left outside the village guard system and the process of depopulation is virtually complete." (COE 3 June 1998, para. 18)

"As so many villages have now been evacuated and because the fighting has now moved to the mountains, the rate of evacuations has decreased in recent years, with 30 villages

being evacuated in 1998. The Human Rights Association states that, as of October 2000, no village clearances took place during the year." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 4.26)

See also Human Rights Watch "Weapons Transfers and Violations of the Laws of War in Turkey", November 1995 [Internet]

A source of insecurity: the "village guards" (1984-2001)

- More than 65,000 civilians in southeastern Turkey have been pressured by the authorities to join "village guards", paramilitary militias set up to fight the PKK
- Villagers faced danger from both the PKK and the Government when choosing whether or not to join the guard force
- Village guards have been accused repeatedly of drug trafficking, rape, corruption, theft, and human rights abuses
- No steps have been taken to disband the village militia which remain an obstacle to the return of the displaced

"The 'village guards' are armed and paid by the authorities to defend their villages against attack by the PKK and to deny them logistical support from the villages in the area. Although recruitment into the village guard corps is voluntary (indeed, some Kurdish tribes are pro-government and enthusiastic in their participation) refusal by individuals or entire villages to participate in the system is usually considered by the local forces as an indication of active or passive support for the guerrillas. The evacuation of the village, and its subsequent complete or partial destruction on security grounds, can follow a refusal to join." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 6.19)

"The Government organizes, arms, and pays a civil defense force in the region of more than 65,000 persons, which is known as the village guards. Participation in this paramilitary militia is mainly voluntary, but villagers faced danger from both the PKK and the Government when choosing whether or not to join the guard force. Village guards have a reputation for being the least disciplined of the Government's security forces and have been accused repeatedly of drug trafficking, rape, corruption, theft, and human rights abuses. Inadequate oversight and compensation contribute to this problem, and in some cases Jandarma allegedly have protected village guards from prosecution." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

"It might be assumed that with the apparent end of the guerilla war, the village guard is in the process of disbandment. By 2000 there were probably in the order of 80,000 village guards under arms. This poses a major problem for the State, since they have become reliant on their village guard salaries. If they are disbanded it is feared this could unleash massive criminal activity, backed with firearms. Not only, therefore, has the government taken no steps to disband them, but it has considered recruitment of 'penitent' PKK guerillas into the village guard there have been cases in 2000 of displaced villagers being refused permission to return to their villages unless they enrol in the village guard.

In other words the current evidence indicates that the village guard militia may have become a long-term feature of the region." (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, pp. 45-46)

See also "Les gardiens de village restent maîtres dans le sud-est", AFP 4 Juillet 2000 (published in Info-Turk) [Internet]

The PKK is also responsible for significant internal displacement (1984-2000)

- The Kurdish armed group has also civilians among its targets, in particular village guards and their families
- The number of civilians whom the PKK arbitrarily killed declined after it announced that it would respect the Geneva Conventions
- Amnesty International continued to receive reports of indiscriminate killings of civilians even after PKK's claim to respect common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions

"Although smaller armed opposition groups have operated in Turkey, the PKK has been the most significant, and most violent of them [110]. Although the numbers it is responsible for displacing is hard to quantify, the PKK is undoubtedly directly responsible for significant internal displacement that has occurred in Turkey. Among its civilian targets have been local political figures, such as mayors, and teachers, who teach the Turkish language [111]. The PKK's principal target appears to have been the village guards and their families."

[Endnote 110: Other violent opposition groups reportedly include the Revolutionary Left (Dev Sol/DHKP-C) and the Turkish Workers's and Peasants' Liberation Army (TIKKO).]

[Endnote 111: in the 1998, the PKK abducted three mayors in the southeast, killing one. (HRW, World Report 1999, p. 295)] (USCR 1999, pp. 27-28)

"Armed opposition groups responsible for human rights abuses include the PKK, the DHKP-C, the Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party (TIKB), the Turkish Liberation Army of Peasants and Workers (TIKKO) and the Islamic Raiders of the Big East-Front (IBDA-C). Of these, the PKK is responsible for most deliberate and arbitrary killings. It is a bitter irony that during the 12 years in which the PKK has pursued its military objectives most victims of its deliberate and arbitrary killings have been Kurdish villagers. Reports from various sources show that armed PKK members killed at least 400 prisoners and civilians between 1993 and 1995. Most were killed because they had joined the government-armed village guard forces. Male village guards are frequently killed after being taken prisoner during PKK raids. Village guards Ramazan Baran and Habib Kaya were apparently abducted by PKK members on 11 September 1995. They were found dead near Saribalta village, Tunceli province, the following morning.

Armed opposition groups have an obligation to respect basic humanitarian principles. Yet they knowingly put civilians at risk and have murdered others who took no part in the conflict. Since the conflict began, both sides have treated villagers in southeast Turkey as

a soft target. In the 1980s the PKK frequently massacred whole families. Many women and children are caught in the cross-fire and killed in the course of armed clashes when the PKK attacks village guards in their villages, but relatives of village guards are also sometimes deliberately and arbitrarily killed. Eleven children were apparently deliberately killed when PKK members attacked the village of Daltepe, near Siirt, in October 1993. In the same month PKK members abducted 32 males, including six juveniles, from Yavi, in the Çat district of Erzurum, and killed them. In August 1995 the PKK reportedly returned to the Çat district, and abducted and killed Zülküf Kiliç and his two young brothers, Kadir, aged 16, and Halim, aged 13, from the village of Aga.

In August 1994 a representative of the PKK told Amnesty International in a meeting in London that the organization had committed itself to abide by common Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions. This stipulates that people taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of the armed forces who have laid down their arms or who are out of action because of sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, must be treated humanely in all circumstances and should not be ill-treated or killed. Common Article 3 applies to all parties to an internal armed conflict, including armed opposition groups. The number of deliberate and arbitrary killings by the PKK fell after August 1994. However, Amnesty International continues to receive reports of such killings; there were 50 in 1995 and at least 16 in the first half of 1996.

Some individuals have been abducted and killed because they were suspected of being collaborators or informers.

[...]

The PKK have also claimed responsibility for acts of indiscriminate violence in which civilians, including children, were killed and maimed. [...]

The PKK have also planted bombs in public places, posing an indiscriminate threat to civilians. [...]

In March 1995 and again in April 1996, PKK leader Abdullah calan publicly threatened that the organization would intensify bomb attacks on certain civilian targets in Turkey and abroad. While claiming to respect common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, the PKK has continued to execute captured village guards, while its declared intention to attack civilian targets suggests that, contrary to the assurances given to Amnesty International, the PKK would be prepared to resume indiscriminate killings of civilians.

[...]

The PKK has treated teachers as a military target on the pretext that state education is delivered only in Turkish and that education in Kurdish is forbidden. Ninety teachers have been killed by the PKK since 1984. In late 1994 armed PKK members abducted and killed 19 teachers, most of whom were working in small villages in southeast Turkey." (AI 1 October 1996, sect. 3 "Abuses by armed opposition groups")

Serious violations of human rights by security forces in the fighting against the PKK (1984-2000)

- Since 1984, Police, Jandarma, village guards, and the armed forces have conducted an intense campaign to suppress PKK terrorism

- 4,460 civilians have lost their lives in the fighting since 1987
- Civilians have also been victims of forced disappearance, torture, extrajudicial executions
- Indiscriminate attacks on civilian populations by the armed forces have also been reported

"Since 1984 the PKK has waged a violent terrorist insurgency in southeast Turkey, directed against both security forces and civilians. In response, police, Jandarma, village guards, and the armed forces conducted an intense campaign to suppress PKK terrorism. However, since 1999 almost all such violent activity by the PKK has ceased, although some armed clashes between the two sides continued to occur. Security forces continued to target active PKK units as well as those persons they believed supported or sympathized with the PKK. There continued to be few reports of government and PKK human rights abuses committed against noncombatants. According to statistics from the governor of the state of emergency region, 23,415 PKK members, 5,029 security force members, and 4,460 civilians have lost their lives in the fighting since 1987. During the year, 29 members of the security forces and 15 civilians died, according to the military.

Unlike in the previous year, there were no credible allegations of serious abuses by security forces during the course of operations against the PKK." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

"Turkey is situated in a politically unstable region and has experienced two decades of intense political violence by armed opposition groups, principally the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which have attacked and killed civilians. The state has responded with a wide range of security measures which, by violating basic human rights, have further endangered the personal security of individual citizens. Despite all the promises of reform, Turkish citizens can still be swept off the streets and into a police station or gendarmerie post, where they may be held for up to a month. There they will be unprotected by even the most basic safeguards against torture, still a standard method of interrogation. Since 1980 more than 400 people have died in police custody, apparently as a result of torture. The exact status of security forces allegedly responsible for violations is sometimes hard to establish, particularly in the southeast, where security forces do not always wear standard uniform or insignia. In most reports of torture, the detainee was interrogated by plainclothes police officers of the Criminal Investigation or Anti-Terror branches or by gendarmes. Gendarmes are soldiers who carry out police duties in rural Turkey. Many allegations of extrajudicial execution have been made against members of Special Operations Teams. These are technically police officers under the authority of the Interior Ministry, heavily armed for close combat with the PKK. Special Operations Team members frequently accompany members of the paramilitary village guard force and gendarmes in security raids on villages. Regular army and air forces also participate in large operations in the southeast." (AI 1 October 1996, "A state of insecurity")

"Ten years ago people did not disappear in custody in Turkey. In 1991 there were a handful of reports, and several more in 1992. In 1993 there were at least 26. In 1994 there were more than 50 reported disappearances, the highest number in any country reported that year to the UN Working Group in Enforced Disappearances, which expressed particular concern at this considerable increase. At least 35 people disappeared in 1995.

Most of the disappeared are Kurdish villagers with no history of political activity, detained during the course of security raids on suspicion of giving food or shelter to PKK members. Many families of the disappeared fear their relatives have died under torture, or that they were arbitrarily killed in reprisal of the deaths of soldiers in clashes with the PKK." (AI 1 October 1996, "Disappearances - how to torture a whole family")

"Repression has long been the response to security problems in Turkey, but in 1991 certain elements in the security forces went even further. They stepped outside the law and began to wage a full-scale dirty war. An unprecedented wave of political murder swept through the southeast but continued onto the streets of Ankara and Istanbul.

In the late 1980s Amnesty International had received occasional allegations of extrajudicial execution, but in the spring of 1991 the organization began to receive a large number of reports of death squad style killings of Kurdish villagers in the Midyat area of Sirnak province. The security forces were clearly involved in the killings. The perpetrators were able to pass through military check-points and were sometimes moved around using military vehicles and helicopters.

In mid-1999 Kurdish leaders began to be targeted and by early 1992 scores of people were being gunned down in the first of hundreds of street killings by small groups of assassins in the cities in the southeast. In most cases the killers were never identified but there is evidence that the security forces were orchestrating the killings by arming and paying the assassins. Most of the victims were perceived by the security forces as potential enemies of the state. They were people who worked for left-wing or Kurdish nationalist publications, and people who had previously been detained or imprisoned on suspicion of membership of the PKK or other illegal Kurdish groups.

More than 1,000 people have died in these political street killings since 1991." (AI 1 October 1996, Extrajudicial execution in the southeast)

"Although the armed conflict in the southeast lessened in intensity, both government forces and the PKK continued to commit serious human rights violations. Village guards - ethnic Kurdish villagers who functions as government-appointed civil guards in remote areas of the southeast - continued to be implicated in many abuses, and civilians remained particularly vulnerable in the region. During a parliamentary human rights commission hearing in February, the governor of Batman was reported to have said that 'methods beyond the accepted norms' were often used to convince villagers that they should not assist the PKK. Victims who petitioned the parliamentary commission described methods such as forcing villagers to walk on mine fields or torturing family members and neighbors. Several village guards stood trial during 1998 for crimes such as rape and the execution of civilians.

In addition to the village guards, Jandarma and police 'special teams' are viewed as those most responsible for abuses. However, the incidence of credible allegations of serious abuses by security forces, in the course of operations against the PKK, is significantly lower than in the past." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

"Although indiscriminate fire by Turkish security forces is not the most consistent violation of international law in Turkey's southeast, it remains a persistent problem. In some cases, the security forces have grossly overreacted to actual or suspected PKK attacks. In these incidents, which have occurred primarily in the towns and cities, security forces appear to have taken advantage of suspected or actual PKK activity to unleash a barrage of fire on civilian neighborhoods suspected of containing PKK sympathizers.

In some instances, the indiscriminate fire may have been due to negligence on the part of Turkish gunners seeking to hit PKK targets. But lack of intent to kill or cause destruction is no excuse for failing to care for the well-being of civilians.

In other cases, security forces have shelled, bombed or strafed villages, either as punishment for presumed PKK sympathies or as a method of intimidation aimed at forcing villagers from their homes. In the latter set of cases, the security forces appear to have relied on indiscriminate fire as a quick and easy way of evacuating villages in preparation for their later destruction. In some such attacks, civilians have been wounded or killed; in others, they fled their homes which were partially destroyed. Later, troops came and completed the destruction.

In a number of cases, Turkish security forces have targeted civilian settlements for serious attack with the intention of causing large numbers of civilian casualties. This is best exemplified by the March 1994 series of Air Force bombing raids on villages in the Ôirnak area, in which dozens of civilians were killed and entire villages were destroyed. Other similar cases occurred in 1992 and 1993, however, suggesting that the March 1994 attacks, while remarkable in their scope and intensity, were not isolated events." (AI November 1995, sect. V)

Turkish authorities imposed food embargo on several Kurdish villages (1991-2001)

- The objective was to deny logistical support to the PKK
- Access to high pastures have been recently restored and food embargo has been lifted by governors in several provinces

"In an effort to deny the PKK logistical support, the Jandarma during the year occasionally rationed food and other essentials in some rural areas in the emergency region. Security forces returned to evacuated villages and burned homes, to deny the PKK, and have shot livestock, burned forests and orchards, or denied villagers permission to harvest fields." (U.S. DOS 26 February 2000, sect. 1g)

"In Tunceli province, a food embargo imposed by the army was reportedly in effect in 1991. Sporadic food blockades have also been reported in parts of Bingol and in the village of Tepe, near Lice in Diyarbakir province. These have allegedly caused severe shortages and hardship among the inhabitants. The usual aim was to limit the amount of staple foods which villagers could obtain, and therefore reduce supplies available to the

PKK, though in the case of Tepe, a two-month blockade was imposed in reprisal for the PKK murder of a village guard." (Graham Brown April 1998, sect. 3.1)

In October [2000] the governor of Tunceli formally abolished the food embargo in that region, the last large-scale rationing in the region. Food rationing also had been justified as a means of denying logistical support to the PKK. Provincial authorities deny villagers access to some high pasture for grazing, citing security concerns, but have allowed other villages access to their high pastures." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

Internal exile: a discretionary decision of the state of emergency region's governor (1987-2001)

- The governor has the authority to remove from the region citizens for reasons of general security and public order
- Teachers, party officials and trade unionists have been affected by this practice

"Although there is no legal internal exile, since 1990 the state of emergency region's governor in the southeast has had the authority to 'remove from the region,' for a period not to exceed the duration of the state of emergency (in place for 15 years), citizens under his administration whose activities 'give an impression that they are prone to disturb general security and public order.' Teachers, party officials, and trade unionists have been affected by this provision in the past, and dozens of unionists were kept out of the southeast this year, according to press reports. In July security officials in Batman took the passports of two visiting British parliamentarians who were looking into the issue of the Ilisu dam, and also took documents of a Republican People's Party (CHP) official and some accompanying journalists." (U.S.DOS February 2001, sect. 2d)

"A number of trade unionists were exiled from the State of Emergency Region starting from January [2001], reaching 33 in February. The practice targeted the executives of the Education Union (Egitim Sen) in particular. Since a discretionary act of the Regional Governor under the State of Emergency Legislation [1] cannot be challenged in courts, the unionists declared that they would petition the European Court of Human Rights. While the unionists were exiled to the western provinces, there have been no investigations launched against the persons affected. The unionists declared that the practice was a political one as the administration had not launched any investigation related to their participation in a one-day act of protest of the Confederation of the Public Labour Unions (KESK). Tunceli Governor Mustafa Erkal, answering questions in a press briefing on 30 January, said for his part that they did not dismiss the teachers, but 'changed their locations due to their behaviours that offended the quiet in the province as well as on the basis of the evidence that they commit crimes'".

[Endnote 1: State of Emergency Law, Article 11/c: [As amended by Decree 3076 dated 14 November 1984] Suspension of the activities or associations for periods not exceeding three months, after considering each individual case;]
(Human Rights Foundation of Turkey February 2001, sect. 1)

Other causes of displacement

Dam projects: Another cause of displacement in Southeastern Turkey (2001)

- About 200,000 persons have so far been displaced as a result of land expropriation for dam projects in southeastern Turkey
- A large dam is planned at Ilisu of the River Tigris and will necessitate the compulsory resettlement of more than an estimated 16,000 people

Table: Population displacement, Area of Land Expropriation by Type of Resettlement in GAP Area

DAM	Expro- priated Area (ha)	No of Districts, Villages, Sub-villages	Total Pop. Displaced	RESETTLEMENT			
				Population opting for Govt. Assisted Resettlement	% of Total	Population opting for Self Resettlement	% of Total
Ataturk Completed	43 400	1 district 34 villages 85 sub- villages	55 300	2 508	5	52 792	95
Batman Completed	2 410	17 villages	10 854	1 582	15	9 272	85
Birecik In progress	5030	1 district 44 villages	31971	6500	20	25 471	80
Cat Completed	1 430	7 village 3 sub- villages	4 000	1 965	49	2 035	51
Dicle In progress	1 240	1 district 19 villages	2 875	343	12	2 532	88
Karakaya Completed	29 800	105 villages	45 000	3 999	9	41 001	91
Karkamis in progress	1 165	1 district 12 villages	15 000	Under Construction	-	-	-
Keban Completed	62 000	174 villages	30 000	6 487	22	23 512	78
Kralkizi In progress	2 085	14 villages	2 732	21	23	2 711	77
Total	193 076	4 districts 382 villages 88 sub- villages	197 732	23 405	13	159 326	87

Source: DSI, GAP, 1999

(ECGD 22 December 2000, sect. 3.5)

"There are 9 large dams in the GAP area which necessitate the involuntary resettlement of rural and urban populations. Table [above] shows that 143,530 hectare of land has been expropriated, 382 villages, 88 sub-villages, 4 districts and a town are affected by dam projects. 87% of families have opted for self-resettlement and only 13 % have requested government assisted resettlement." (UK Government 22 December 2000, sect. 3.5)

"The Turkish Government has for many years been developing plans for hydro-electric power generation in South Eastern Anatolia (the 'GAP' project). As a result of an increased demand for electricity following greater urbanisation and industrial and commercial development, those plans are now being implemented. A large dam is planned at Ilisu of the River Tigris, 65kms upstream from the borders with Iraq and Syria." (House of Commons, Select Committee on International Development 4 April 2001, Annex A)

"A large number of villages will be affected necessitating the compulsory resettlement of more than an estimated 16,000 people and affecting a further 16,000 people." (ECGD 22 December 2000, sect. 1)

High seismic risks

- Two massive earthquakes in 1999 destroyed at least 300,000 homes in northwestern Turkey
- Numerous smaller tremours continue to be registered in Istanbul but cause no damages (2001)

"In the second half of 1999, two massive earthquakes struck north-western Turkey, the country's most densely populated region and industrial heartland, in less than three months. The first, on 17 August 1999, measured between 7.4 and 7.8 on the Richter scale and lasted 45 seconds. Izmit, an industrial city of one million in western Turkey, was nearest the epicentre. The official death toll stands at over 17,100, with some 44,000 people injured, nearly 300,000 homes either damaged or collapsed, and more than 40,000 business premises similarly affected.

The disaster was followed by more than 1,300 aftershocks, culminating in the second quake at 18h57 on 12 November 1999, which rated 7.2 on the Richter scale and shook Duzce and Kaynasli counties in the north-western province of Bolu. According to the official casualty figures, the confirmed death toll was 845, with 4,948 people injured." (IFRC 12 July 2001)

"A series of 115 tremours, measuring between 3.0 and 4.8 on the Richter Scale, were recorded by the Kandilli Observatory in Istanbul during this reporting period [1 March - 30 April 2001]. No damage or injuries were reported." (IFRC 13 June 2001)

POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

Global figures

Credible estimates for the population displaced as a result of the conflict in southeastern Turkey range from 400,000 to 1 million as of December 2000

- Some government officials deny that any people in Turkey are internally displaced
- The number of displaced could be as high as three million, according to some local NGOs
- Around 350,000 persons have been "evacuated" from their villages, according to governmental figures
- According to the U.S. Department of State, the highest credible estimate of displaced persons is as high as 1 million.
- The U.S. Committee for Refugees gives a range of 400,000 to 1 million as reflecting evacuations and spontaneous movement from and within the southeast

"Estimates of the numbers of displaced people vary widely. Some government officials deny that any people in Turkey are internally displaced. Some local nongovernmental organizations put the number of displaced persons as high as three million. In its human rights report for 2000, the U.S. Department of State said that 'credible estimates' of internally displaced people in Turkey range as high as one million. By year's end, the government appeared not to have updated its official figure for 'evacuated persons' of about 336,000 at the end of 1999.

The government's count of internal displacement includes only persons displaced as a result of village and hamlet evacuations; it does not include people who felt compelled to flee, for example, because of conflict with Village Guards (a Kurdish paramilitary group created by the government to oppose the Kurdish Worker's Party, PKK, in the southeast), even if the village itself was not evacuated. Therefore, the figure based solely on evacuations must be regarded as below the baseline for an estimate of the number of internally displaced persons in Turkey.

The U.S. Committee for Refugees (USCR) therefore prefers a range of 400,000 to 1 million as reflecting evacuations and spontaneous movement, as well as displacement from the southeast to the central and western parts of Turkey and rural to urban movement within the southeast itself." (USCR 2001, p. 263)

"Between 1984 and 1999, and particularly in the early 1990's, a large number of persons were displaced forcibly from villages. The practice was justified by the Government as a means of protecting civilians or preventing PKK guerillas from obtaining logistical support from the inhabitants. [...] The Government reported that 378,000 persons had 'migrated' (it disputes the term 'evacuation') from 3,165 state of emergency region villages between 1994 and 1999; many left before that due to the fighting. The highest

credible estimate of displaced persons is as high as 1 million." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

Turkish government gives a total of 400,000 persons forced to leave their villages (1998-1999)

- Of these, 23,000 persons were reported to have returned to their places of origin as of 1998
- Turkish Parliamentary Committee used governmental figures in 1998 report on internal displacement
- The 1998 US State Department cited 560 000 as "a credible estimate" of the number of people evacuated from their homes
- According to the Kurdish Institute in Paris, the number of persons displaced within south-east Turkey over the last 20 years amounts to 2.5-3 million

1999

"The exact number of persons forcibly displaced from villages in the southeast since 1984 is unknown. Human rights NGO's tend to attribute most rural-urban migration to evacuations, whereas some persons move to escape the violence or conflict-caused economic depression, or to pursue opportunities in western cities. Government statistics tend to minimize the number of persons who left against their will. Observers agree that 3,000 to 4,000 villages and hamlets have been depopulated. The Government reported that through 1999 the total number of those evacuated was 362,915 persons, from 3,236 villages and hamlets, of whom 26,481 have been resettled with government assistance in 176 villages and hamlets. Another 61,987 have applied to return. A figure given by a former Member of Parliament from the region--560,000--appears to be the most credible estimate of those forcibly evacuated. However, observers in the region estimate that the total number of displaced persons is approximately 800,000, and a few NGO's put the number as high as 2 million." (U.S. DOS February 2000, sect. 1g)

1998

"The most recent figure for internal displacement in Turkey comes from the report of the Parliamentary Commission, released in June 1998. All of the statistics used in the report originate with the State of Emergency Region (OHAL) governor's office, so these should be regarded as the official government count. It reports that 401,328 people were forced to migrate from 3,428 residential areas, of which 905 were villages and 2,523 hamlets. Of these, 517 villages and 1,614 hamlets were evacuated in the State of Emergency region, resulting in the displacement of 251,366 persons. Another 126,969 persons were displaced outside the OHAL region, having been evacuated from 303 villages and 2,345 hamlets. According to the report, 22,993 of these displaced persons have returned to their places of origin, 6 percent of the total, leaving 378,335 still displaced.

The Commission's own parliamentary colleagues dispute these figures, however. Deputy Orhan Yildirim, the MP from Tunceli, voiced his dissent to the Commission's findings (noted in the Commission report), saying, 'the number of evacuated villages given in the

official statistics is wrong. For example, Balik Village is my village; it is entirely empty of people. It is listed as not evacuate.'

Even if the Commission's count of evacuated villages were accurate, by limiting that count to persons displaced as a result of village and hamlet evacuations, the Commission's figure does not include people [...] who fled from towns or cities in the southeast, or of villagers who felt compelled to flee, for example, because of conflict with village guards, even if their village itself was not evacuated. As such, the figure based solely on evacuations must be regarded as the minimum baseline for an estimate of the number of internally displaced persons in Turkey." (USCR 1999, p. 6)

"On 28 July 1997, the Chairman of this Committee, Mr Seyit Hasim Hasimi, held a press conference in Diyarbakir. He announced that forced evacuation of villages and hamlets by the Turkish armed forces in the region had resulted in large numbers of displaced people and potential refugees. He confirmed that 364 742 inhabitants of 3 185 villages and hamlets had been forced out since 1990 in the framework of the fight against terrorism. These figures were publicly confirmed later by Mr Bülent Ecevit, Deputy Prime Minister, who said that the villages had been emptied 'for security reasons'. The US State Department cited 560 000 as 'a credible estimate' of the number of people deprived of their homes as a result of the evacuations." (COE 3 June 1998, para. 17)

"According to Mr Nezan, President of the Kurdish Institute in Paris, the number of persons displaced within south-east Turkey over the last 20 years amounts to 2.5-3 million. The population of Diyarbakir, for example, rose from 380 000 in 1990 to 1 million in 1996. Concerning displacement throughout the rest of Turkey, the figure is approximately 8 million, of whom some 3 million are in Istanbul alone." (COE 3 June 1998, paras. 20-22)

Between 5 and 8 million persons are supposedly living in southeastern Turkey (2000-2001)

- A majority of Kurds reportedly live currently outside the eastern and southeastern provinces

"The co-rapporteurs have no official figures about the total number of Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin. Although in the census of 1990 data were required about the citizens' mother tongue, it is not certain that the information collected on this issue was complete and reliable. The co-rapporteurs have been told by the Democratic Left Party that about 12 million Turkish citizens are of Kurdish origin. The Turkish authorities said that according to the 1997 population census, the number of inhabitants in the cities in the provinces under emergency rule was 4.973.805 and in the neighbouring cities 2.900.225. These figures would seem to indicate that around 8 million Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin live (or used to live) in South-eastern Turkey; however, the Democratic Left Party believes their number does not exceed 5 million. The number of Turks of Kurdish origin living abroad is estimated at 500.000." (COE 13 June 2001, para. 135)

"Following the internal displacement and migration since 1990, the distribution of Kurds has changed significantly. A majority of Kurds now live outside the eastern and southeastern provinces. It has been suggested that Kurds now account for one-third of Istanbul's total population of approximately 12 million." (Kirisci June 1998, p. 199)

PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

General

Impact of conflict-induced displacement on Turkey's urbanisation (1998-2001)

- Migratory movements to urban areas have also been caused by the conflict-caused economic depression in southeastern areas
- Many of the displaced have crowded into the southeastern provincial cities, such as Diyarbakir and Batman, more than doubling their populations
- It is estimated that as many as 3.5 million Kurds have left southeast Turkey since 1984 and have settled mainly in large cities in the west

"Internal displacement as a result of conflict and fear in part of a larger migratory phenomenon occurring throughout Turkey that has resulted in the dramatic growth of urban populations in recent years. Undoubtedly, economic factors account for some of the urbanization, and even persons fleeing for political reasons often have a mix of motives, including seeking employment, or even, reportedly, food.

Rural to urban movement has often been the first step in a migratory pattern that has taken large numbers of Kurds from the east to the west. Diyarbakir, the unofficial capital of Turkish Kurdistan, grew from 30,000 in the 1930s to 65,000 by 1956, to 140,000 by 1970, to 400,000 by 1990, and swelled to about 1.5 million by 1997. Most Turkish cities have developed impoverished, overcrowded, ramshackle slums on their outskirts, *gecekondular*, 'huts built in one night'. Many of the displaced Kurds in provincial cities and towns crowd into homes of relatives, sometimes with more than thirty people residing in dwellings intended for a single family.

Although the desire for economic betterment has motivated some to migrate, it is not clear that migrants have responded to the pull of opportunity in western cities as much as to the push of conflict-caused economic depression in the rural southeast. While some of the displacement has been spontaneous, the Turkish military systematically expelled Kurdish villagers in the country's southeast between 1993 and 1995. The Turkish army's campaign to evacuate villages suspected of supporting the PKK began in February 1993. Army and security forces have depopulated mountainous, rural areas, and pushed the village populations into urban centers, creating economic hardship for large numbers of displaced persons, most of whom had been herders or otherwise tied to the pastoral economy. Many of the displaced have crowded into the provincial cities, such as Diyarbakir, mentioned above, and Batman, more than doubling their populations." (USCR 1999, pp. 4-6)

"The ongoing conflict between the Turkish armed forces and the PKK guerrillas, and the poor economic situation in the southeast, have caused considerable migration away from

the rural areas in the southeast. Many have remained in the southeast and moved to cities such as Diyarbakir, Siirt, Tunceli and Cizre, whose populations have doubled or trebled as a result of the migration. The large cities in the west have also been major recipients of this migration. It is estimated that as many as 3.5 million Kurds have left southeast Turkey since 1984. Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara have received the most migrants, with Istanbul accommodating almost 1.5 million new immigrants. Between one-half and almost two-thirds of the Kurdish population now live in peaceful assimilation in western Turkey and on the southern coast (3 million in the Istanbul conurbation, 2 - 3 million on the southern coast, 1 million on the Aegean coast, 1 million in central Anatolia and the remaining 6 million in east and southeast Turkey)." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 7.27)

"Three patterns of migration can be identified:

- The majority of internally displaced people from the rural areas have moved into the nearest urban centres. Provincial capitals such as Batman, Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Sanliurfa and Van have been particularly affected;
- Those internally displaced people with greater economic resources and the right contacts have moved further away to cities such as Adana, Gaziantep, Kahramanmaras and Mersin, outside the emergency law provinces; and
- Many members of the middle class in the provincial cities have moved to western cities in Turkey such as Ankara, Antalya, Bursa, Istanbul and Ismir.

[...]

The short-term economic and humanitarian consequences of this massive migration have been disastrous. The already depressed regional economy has deteriorated even further. The cities have become overwhelmed with people swelling the ranks of the unemployed and stretching municipal services. Starvation is reported among the poorest of the internally displaced living in makeshift housing in the cities of eastern and southeastern Turkey. Villagers have been forced to slaughter their herds to finance their move into urban centres. The tourist industry has virtually disappeared from this locality. Furthermore, there has also been a flight of capital from the region as the relatively well-off have closed their businesses and small factories before moving to the west of Turkey. Inevitably, these developments have aggravated the employment situation and resulted in further pressure for groups to migrate out of eastern and southeastern cities." (Kirisici June 1998, pp. 198-199)

Kurdish refugees returning from Iraq join the ranks of the internally displaced (2000)

- Many of the returnees have been unable to return to their villages which are destroyed or still sealed off for security reasons

"Repatriation of Turkish Kurds from Iraq

The 263 Kurdish refugees who repatriated from northern Iraq in 2000 more than doubled the 108 who repatriated in 1999, but was still only about one-third the number of refugees who repatriated in 1998. About 2,200 Turkish Kurds have returned since November 1995.

Although the government has not extended an amnesty to the Kurdish refugees who fled in 1994, it has said that it would not prosecute them for illegal departure from Turkey. Some returnees have been arrested upon return, mostly charged with membership in (or support of) an illegal organization.

Upon the returnees' arrival, the Turkish authorities bring them to the 'Haji' camp in Silopi, where they are registered and undergo security clearances. Nearly 90 percent of the returnees originate in the war-torn southeastern province of Sirnak and Hakkari, where many of their former villages are destroyed or still sealed off for security reasons. If unable to return to their places of origin, the returnees join the ranks of the internally displaced, usually living with relatives." (USCR 2001, pp. 265-266)

PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

Physical security

Security in villages in southeastern Turkey remains very precarious (2001)

- Human Rights Foundation of Turkey continues to report about villages being raided by security forces
- Villagers risk being submitted to humiliations and beaten

"Tajdin Süslü, Agabey Demir, Esref Dinç, Burhan Dinç, Yusuf Demir, Naci Demir and Ýhsan Demir, all of whom are living in the Pacan village of Van-Gürpýnar, stated that they had been detained by the gendarmes on 25 February when returning from Van. The villagers alleged that they had been kept at Karahisar Gendarmerie Station for an evening and that they had been beaten throughout that evening. The villagers stated that they were run down and insulted by the gendarmes who asked them, "What are you doing here? Are you taking this sugar to the terrorists? The villagers furthermore stated that they had tried to go to the Çilik village before, but that the gendarmes had not allowed them to proceed.

Special Team members raided Hasanoba, Yukari Çir and Asagi Çir villages of Bingöl-Karlioiva on 10 March. During the raids, villagers named Ferit Aksoy and Mustafa Güngör were kept awaited on snow while being bare naked, and were beaten.

Within the 2nd week of March some villages of Diyarbakir-Lice and Diyarbakir-Kulp were raided. During the raids organized to the Çirali, Kiyi, Zümrüt villages of Lice, and Karaagaç, Hevidan and Kafa villages of Kulp the villagers were asked to fill in a form in which there were questions like: what is your ethnicity, mother-tongue; how is your economic condition, il do you have any children living outside, who is imprisoned, who participated in the PKK?

A row broke out between the village guards of Buzikri and Hergule villages of Siirt-Eruh on 19 March, in connection with a land dispute over the fields of evacuated villages. The village guards named Abdurrahman Kaya, Sait Ýnan and Guri (surname undisclosed) were injured. Following the incident the village guards of Buzikri village Mahfuz, Haci, Sidik and Mustafa Aslan were detained. The detainees were released after testifying at the prosecution office. After that, Buzikri village was raided by the security forces, and the firearms of Halil Bestas, village headman, and village guards Haci Aslan Mahfus Aslan, Sidik Aslan and one more guard whose name was undisclosed were seized.

At the end of March, Bagdere (Basnik), Yuvaköy (Heline), Çigdemli (Kürbeyte) and Karacalar (Hacican) villages of Diyarbakýr-Silvan were raided by the soldiers. Many villagers were reportedly detained during the raids and the houses of Hatip Yanik, Davut

Yanik and Mehmet Göçer in Çigdemli village were reportedly set on fire. The detained villagers were reportedly subjected to torture and maltreatment." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey March 2001, sect. 2.1)

Majority of enforced disappearances affects ethnic Kurds in southeastern Turkey (2001)

- Numerous cases of enforced disappearances attributed to state officials have been reported by international organisations, the majority of them in the southeast
- Most cases concern persons of Kurdish ethnic origin and occurred in the provinces of Diyarbakir and Siirt in south-east Anatolia
- Most of the missing persons have allegedly been arrested and mistreated by the police on charges of belonging to the PKK
- Members of the security forces who are allegedly responsible for most cases of enforced disappearances have rarely been prosecuted for these acts
- The number of enforced disappearances has declined significantly since 1994
- Abductions by PKK terrorists of local villagers and state officials has virtually ended since the capture of the PKK leader Ocalan (1999)

"In January 1998, the Commission on Human Rights reported to the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances that 153 cases of disappearance had been transmitted to the Turkish Government since 1990. The majority of these occurred in the southeast, in areas where a state of emergency is in force. In February 1999 Amnesty International reported that of these 153 cases, 83 remained unresolved.

The United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UNWGEID) visited Turkey in September 1998, and reported their findings at the end of December 1998. Since its creation, 166 cases of enforced disappearance have been reported to the UNWGEID, of which 79 have been clarified, most of them by the Turkish government. The highest number of cases occurred in 1994 (72 cases). The numbers dropped to 17 in 1995, to 12 in 1996 and to 9 in 1997. During 1998, 13 cases were reported. The victims included members of political opposition parties, journalists working for newspapers opposed to the government, trade unionists or villagers suspected of supporting subversive organizations. The UNWGEID also received allegations of disappearances imputed to the PKK and other armed groups. However, these cases do not fall within the mandate of the UNWGEID.

Most of the disappearances concerned persons of Kurdish ethnic origin and occurred in the provinces of Diyarbakir and Siirt in south-east Anatolia. There were some disappearances in Antalya, Izmir and Istanbul. Most of the cases followed the same pattern: the missing persons had allegedly been arrested at their homes on charges of belonging to the PKK and taken to the police station, but their detention was later denied by the authorities, in most cases police officers or state prosecutors. In many cases, torture or ill-treatment at the hands of the security forces was reported or feared. Some of

the disappearances occurred during raids conducted by gendarmes accompanied, at times, by village guards.

It has been reported by some Turkish human rights groups that some Turkish law enforcement officials do not register suspects when they are initially taken into detention, the allegation being that if the suspect should die during questioning then there will be no record of them having been detained. There is also the problem concerning the effective incommunicado detention available to the authorities in relation to suspects held for crimes covered by the State Security Courts.

The Turkish government has sought to remedy these problems by introducing new detention procedures in August 1998. Suspects now have the ability to notify his family of his detention, even in cases covered by the State Security Courts, provided there is no harm to the outcome of the investigation. Full detention registers are to be kept and suspects are to be medically examined before they are taken into detention as well as after. Turkish NGOs have complained that the provisions are frequently ignored.

The UNWGEID was of the opinion that, comparatively speaking and taking into account the number of outstanding cases of disappeared persons, as well as the decrease of allegations in the past few years, mainly since 1994, enforced disappearances in Turkey should not be evaluated as a massive or systematic practice of governmental agencies. Such an assessment does not exclude the existence of such a practice.

[...]

Although members of the security forces are said to be responsible for most cases of enforced disappearances, they are rarely brought to trial or prosecuted for these acts. Although arrests of police and other law enforcement personnel increased in cases of extrajudicial killings, the number of arrests remained low, and punishment for those persons convicted remained insufficient. The PKK has routinely kidnapped young men, or threatened their families, as part of its recruiting effort. PKK terrorists continue to abduct local villagers, teachers, journalists and officials in the south east." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 5.16-5.23)

"Unlike the previous year, there were no reports of disappearances of political activists. Accurate statistics on the disappearance of those previously under detention, or seen being taken into custody by security forces or law enforcement officials, are hard to confirm. However the HRF [Human Rights Foundation] claims that there were no such disappearances in 2000, compared with 36 of this type in 1999.

[...]

The PKK's practice of kidnapping young men or threatening their families as part of its recruiting effort and abductions by PKK terrorists of local villagers and state officials has virtually ended, due to reduced PKK capabilities in the southeast and calls by its captured leader Ocalan for the PKK to withdraw from its former operating areas in the country." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1b)

For the latest reports on cases of disappearances, consult the monthly human rights reports of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey [[Internet](#)]

Most reports of extrajudicial killings pertain to southeastern Turkey (2000-2001)

- Cases includes deaths in police custody, deaths of suspected criminals in house raids and deaths of individuals who refuse to become village guards
- Security forces have been reportedly involved in most cases but the government blames many of cases the Islamist Turkish terrorist group Hezbollah
- The PKK has discontinued its practice of targeted political murders but still clashes with security forces and "village guards"

"Security forces are responsible for extrajudicial and political killings, particularly deaths in police custody, deaths of suspected criminals in house raids and deaths of individuals who refuse to become village guards. Most of the reports pertain to the south east. The principal victims of extrajudicial killings and "mystery killings" which security forces are suspected of having carried out include 'suspected PKK sympathisers, HADEP and DEP organizers, journalists especially of pro-Kurdish publications, and trade union activists' as well as 'prominent members of the Kurdish community, physicians, human rights monitors, [and] local politicians'. The government blames many of the 'mystery killings' on Hizbullah/ Hezbollah, an Islamist Turkish terrorist group. In January 1998, four trials continued against 89 Hizbullah/ Hezbollah members charged with a total of 113 murders.

[...]

The PKK routinely commits political and extrajudicial killings, primarily in the rural south east. The PKK, the DHKP/C and other armed groups, such as the Turkish Workers' and Peasants' Liberation Movement (TIKKO), reportedly use the threat of murder as a form of party discipline. According to the US Department of State, PKK terrorists 'murdered non-combatants, targeting village officials, teachers and other perceived representatives of the State and committed random murders in their effort to intimidate the populace'. The PKK regularly carry out attacks against village guards, often executing the guards, their wives and children." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 5.24-5.26)

"According to human rights monitors, there were no killings of high profile, pro-Kurdish figures in the southeast or of pro-Kurdish politicians, journalists, or lawyers. The HRF reported a nationwide total of 10 unsolved killings, some of which may have had a political component. In May the Diyarbakir Provincial Chairman for the right-wing National Action Party (MHP) was killed while walking near his home. In December [2000] a human rights activist in Eskisehir was allegedly abducted by persons claiming to be police officers, forced to drink pesticide, and left for dead (although he was found and taken to a hospital, where he recovered). According to information provided by the Governor of Eskisehir, the assailants were criminals posing as police officers.

The PKK discontinued its practice of targeted political murders, but it remains armed and in some cases clashed with soldiers, Jandarma, and state-paid paramilitary village guards. According to the Turkish National Police, during the year [2000], 35 security officials and 24 civilians died in terrorist incidents, and 270 PKK members were killed by security forces." (U.S.DOS February 2001, sect. 1a)

For the latest reports of extrajudicial killings, consult the monthly human rights reports of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey [[Internet](#)]

Torture remains widespread in the southeast and in large cities, despite recent improvements (2000)

- Human rights advocates believe that thousands of detainees were tortured during the year
- Only 5 to 20 percent of the victims allegedly report torture because they fear retaliation or believe that complaints are futile

"The Constitution prohibits torture; however, members of the security forces continue to torture, beat, and otherwise abuse persons regularly. Despite the Government's cooperation with unscheduled foreign inspection teams, public pledges by successive governments to end the practice, and government initiatives designed to address the problem, torture continues to be widespread. However, based on reports from a number of sources, the incidence of torture appears to have declined somewhat, especially in the southeast, where there have been fewer political detentions.

Human rights attorneys and physicians who treat victims of torture say that most persons detained for or suspected of political crimes usually suffer some torture at the hands of police and Jandarma during periods of incommunicado detention before they are brought before a court; ordinary criminal suspects also report frequent torture and mistreatment by police. The HRF estimates the number of credible applications by torture victims at its 5 national treatment centres to be approximately 1,030 in 2000, compared with some 700 in 1999. These figures include complaints stemming from previous years' incidents. The HRF believes that these numbers seriously underrepresent the actual number of persons tortured while in detention or prison. Human rights advocates believe that thousands of detainees were tortured during the year in the southeast, where the problem is particularly serious, but that only 5 to 20 percent report torture because they fear retaliation or believe that complaints are futile.

Some of the factors affecting the rate of torture are the use of incommunicado detention and the number of detentions in general; reduced PKK violence, which has eased treatment by security officials; and increased concern about the problem from many sources. Human rights monitors report improvement in some areas of the country, especially in the first 6 months of the year, but problems continued, especially in some rural areas. All report that torture remains widespread in the southeast and in large cities." (U.S.DOS February 2001, sect. 1c)

For the latest reports of torture consult monthly reports of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey [[Internet](#)]

Arbitrary arrest and detention: derogatory law applies in state of emergency areas (2000)

- The use of a prosecutor's detention order is in practice extremely rare
- In state security cases, the pretrial detention period without charge and without access to a lawyer is longer, can be extended to 15 days in the state of emergency area
- The police reportedly detain, beat, and then release groups after the maximum period of detention in order to intimidate them
- Judges have ordered that some suspects be detained indefinitely, sometimes for years

"Arbitrary arrest and detention continued to be problems. To take a person into custody, a prosecutor must issue a detention order, except when suspects are caught committing a crime. The maximum detention period for those charged with individual common crimes is 24 hours, which may be extended by a judge to a maximum of 7 days; this period is longer for groups. In the state of emergency area, the use of a prosecutor's detention order is in practice extremely rare. According to the HRA, there was significant improvement in the first 8 months of the year in numbers of detentions (21,866) compared with the same period in 1999 (40,380). However, the HRF claims that in the final 2 months of the year there was an upsurge in unregistered detentions in connection with prison protests.

Under the Criminal Code, those detained for individual common crimes are entitled to immediate access to an attorney and may meet and confer with an attorney at any time. In practice, legal experts assert that the authorities do not always respect these provisions and that most citizens do not exercise this right, either because they are unaware of it, or because they fear possibly antagonizing the authorities. The court consistently provides attorneys only to minors or deaf-mutes who cannot represent themselves. By law a detainee's next of kin must be notified as soon as possible after arrest. In criminal and civil cases this requirement is observed.

In state security cases, the pretrial detention period without charge is longer, and the law provides for no immediate access to an attorney. The lack of early access to an attorney is a major factor in the continued use of torture by security forces. Persons detained for individual crimes under the Anti-Terror Law must be brought before a judge within 48 hours. Those charged with crimes of a collective, political, or conspiratorial nature may be detained for an initial period of 48 hours, extended for up to 4 days at a prosecutor's discretion and, with a judge's permission, which is almost always granted, for up to 7 days in most of the country and up to 10 days in the southeastern provinces under the state of emergency. Attorneys are allowed access only after the first 4 days.

Private attorneys and human rights monitors reported uneven implementation of these regulations, especially attorney access. AI asserts that lawyers rarely are permitted adequate access to their clients, even after the fourth day, although they may be allowed to exchange a few words during a brief interview in the presence of security officers. According to the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, the secretive nature of arrests and detentions often leaves the detainee's lawyer and family members with no information about the detention, and police often refuse to disclose the place of detention

or even the fact that the detainee is being held. Current regulations on detention and arrest procedures exempt the authorities from the obligation to inform relatives in the case of state security detentions. In addition legal limits on detention periods at times are circumvented by subjecting a detainee to successive charges or falsifying detention records. The police maintain 24-hour monitoring bureaus that are required to record detentions on computers. According to the HRA, in the state of emergency region the police detain, beat, and then release groups after the maximum period of detention in order to intimidate them.

Once formally charged by the prosecutor, a detainee is arraigned by a judge and allowed to retain a lawyer. After arraignment the judge may release the accused upon receipt of an appropriate assurance, such as bail, or order him detained if the court determines that he is likely to flee the jurisdiction or destroy evidence.

The decision concerning early access to counsel in such cases is left to the public prosecutor, who often denies access on the grounds that it would prejudice an ongoing investigation. Although the Constitution specifies the right of detainees to request speedy arraignment and trial, judges have ordered that some suspects be detained indefinitely, sometimes for years. Many such cases involve persons accused of violent crimes, but there are cases of those accused of nonviolent political crimes being kept in custody until the conclusion of their trials." (U.S.DOS February 2001, sect. 1d)

For the latest reports of arbitrary arrest and detention, consult the monthly human rights reports of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey [[Internet](#)]

Kurdish asylum seekers have been denied asylum in Europe on the ground that they may find a relative safety elsewhere in Turkey (2000)

- According to a UK Home Office report, Kurds outside southeastern Turkey do not usually suffer persecution, provided they do not assert their Kurdish identity
- Courts in Germany rejected claims of persecution in Turkey on the ground that Turkish Kurds are not subject to persecution for merely being Kurds
- UNHCR advise that, in general, Kurds fleeing southeast Turkey have a possibility to relocate within Turkey, unless at risk of being suspected of connection to the PKK

"Outside south east Turkey, Kurds do not usually suffer persecution, or even bureaucratic discrimination, provided they do not publicly or politically assert their Kurdish ethnic identity. Kurds who publicly or politically assert their Kurdish ethnic identity run the risk of harassment, mistreatment and prosecution. In urban areas Kurds are largely assimilated, may not publicly identify themselves as Kurds and generally do not endorse Kurdish separatism. Indeed they often intermarry with Turks, reach the highest levels of society, and are seldom discriminated against on ethnic grounds. Among many high-ranking Kurds who do not deny their ethnic origins are Hikmet etin, the former Deputy Prime Minister and CHP Chairman. It is estimated that 25% of deputies and other government officials claim an ethnic Kurdish background. The late President, Turgut zal, admitted to having Kurdish blood. Seraffetin Elci, an ethnic Kurd, acknowledged that the

situation today is different from that that saw him imprisoned, although there was still no legal status to 'Kurdishness'.

[...]

In February 1997, a UNHCR representative stated that it was not possible to sustain a claim of persecution solely on the basis of being a Kurd per se. The High Administrative Court (VGH) of Baden-Württemberg, in a ruling made public on 6 May 1998, concluded that Turkish Kurds are not subject to group persecution. Two rulings made public on 22 December 1997 by the Administrative Court (VG) of Karlsruhe, Germany, also concluded that Turkish Kurds are not per se exposed to persecution for merely being Kurdish. This conclusion applied even in area where there is serious military confrontation between State forces and the PKK. The UNHCR Background Report on Refugees and Asylum Seekers from Turkey, dated October 1997, does not state that Kurds are group persecuted." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 6.11-6.13)

"UNHCR advise that, in general, Kurds fleeing southeast Turkey have a possibility to relocate within Turkey. According to their information, the large number of internally displaced persons in Turkey do not normally face serious security problems. However, the ongoing conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK has increased tensions between Turks and Kurds, in particular in big cities where there has been a large influx of Kurds fleeing conflict zones. These tensions have been exacerbated by the arrest, trial and conviction of PKK leader, Abdullah Öcalan. Obviously, the group most likely to be exposed to harassment/ prosecution/ persecution are Kurds suspected of being connected to or being sympathisers with the PKK. In view of the above, UNHCR advise that it is essential to find out if Turkish asylum seekers, if returned, would be at risk of being suspected of connection to or sympathy with the PKK, or have otherwise a political profile. If this is the case, UNHCR continue, they should not be considered as having been able to avail themselves of the option to relocate in a region outside the southeast of the country." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 7.28)

NGO fact-finding mission disagree with the view that Kurds can find safety outside the state of emergency area (2000)

- Only an educated minority among the Kurdish population can easily integrate the Turkish society
- Most of the displaced Kurds in western cities are exposed to discrimination and harassment as they cannot hide their Kurdish background
- Displaced Kurds are at risk of arbitrary detention and mistreatment by the police or the gendarmerie
- Kurdish settlements are always under the surveillance of security forces and may be subjected to curfew

"Daily discrimination and the danger of harassment for displaced Kurds

In addition to such formal prohibitions on Kurdish expression, Kurds find discrimination on the street. Before describing this, one should note that a Kurd who is able to pass for a Turk may well not experience any discrimination and if he chooses to make no issue of his Kurdish ethnic identity can, indeed, rise to the highest levels of the state. For example,

Admiral Fehmi Koruturk who became President after the 1971 *coup* was a Kurd. Kamran Inan, to quote another example, held cabinet rank and competed against Demirel for the Presidency in 1993. He came from distinguished Kurdish religious family. But like Koruturk he chose to live a life loyal to the ideology and ethos of the Turkish Republic.

Displaced Kurds, however, do not come from the educated elite. Most betray their Kurdish identity by their speech, and this is confirmed by the place of birth given in their ID. It is from their ranks that many asylum seekers come. There are two standard arguments made in Home Office letters of refusal which are relevant. The first implies a Home Office belief that persons who choose to live outside OHAL, for example to move to a city in central or western Turkey, may safely do so:

'The Secretary of State is not satisfied that if you returned to Turkey now you would have to reside in the troubled south east.'

The second statement, unfortunately cast in highly delphic wording, seemingly implies that, while it is understandable that the rule of law does not prevail inside OHAL (and that therefore there is no available domestic legal recourse), the Home Office believes that there are no obvious grounds for a person to have a well founded fear of persecution *outside* OHAL:

'However, he [the Secretary of State] notes that you do not come from one of these [State of Emergency] provinces and there is no reason to think that the situation in those provinces brings you within the terms of the Convention.'

In the light both of published evidence already in the public domain but also the powerful statements made to us during our fact-finding mission in Turkey, we disagree with this assumption. We consider it wrong-headed in the light of what is known.

We were told repeatedly by those involved in human rights work that Kurds were at risk of arbitrary detention simply *as* Kurds because many members of the security forces view Kurds as suspect *per se*. In other words, there is an inclination by the security forces to detain recognisably Kurdish people, because they may be sympathetic to the Kurdish national movement. Kurds in shanty areas and low income areas are probably at greatest risk. They know that they are collectively under observation and individually must be careful not to attract attention or to be seen in a potentially compromising situation. As Eren Keskin, secretary-general of IHD Istanbul, informed us: 'the shanties are always under police surveillance, or outside the cities, under gendarmerie and JITEM (Jandarma Intelligence) surveillance.'

Gaziosmanpasa quarter in Istanbul has a relatively high proportion of Kurds and Alevis [...]. We were informed:

'There is still a curfew from 11 pm till dawn with road-blocks [introduced following the 'events' of March 1995]. Following the events a police station was sited to overlook the main street and the *cemevi* (Alevi meeting house). Furthermore, the cultural centres of the neighbourhood were progressively closed from 1995. There is no reason to close them. Gazi is very cosmopolitan. The police do not like it.'

Being observed talking with foreigners, such as ourselves, was viewed as dangerous, even for those people who had done nothing wrong and were merely displaced persons. In Adana we were warned not to enter any shanty area after dark. The danger, we were told, was not from the residents but from the police. Many of those invited to speak with us declined. They were too frightened. This confirms McDowall's experience visiting Kurdish low income and shanty areas of Istanbul, notably Kutçuk Çekmece, in March 1996. Those who did speak with us confirmed that they live in permanent fear of the police, and of informers within the community. We received startling confirmation of the close watch kept on shanty areas when we visited Yakarpinar, some 20 km east of Adana. We had been walking for about 5 minutes through the main track of the shanty area when we were suddenly surrounded by armed gendarmes and removed to the nearby gendarmerie station. It was, we were told, for the protection of the inhabitants. We had not had the chance to meet any resident in Yakarpinar except very briefly a middle-aged man who refused to talk with us. He had, he explained to our HADEP minders, been beaten up by the gendarmerie commander only the week before, not on his own account but because his son was a political prisoner.

There is also strong evidence of the reasons for this fear in several of oral statements we took. Three of the more shocking cases [...] indicate that Kurds may well be either 'educated middle class' or belong to longstanding economic migrant families rather than recently displaced villagers. We cannot therefore accept the contention that *any* assumption may be made concerning the potential safety of those moving out of the south-east. Furthermore, there was great consistency in the causes of fear, whether we spoke with displaced Kurds in Istanbul, Adana or Gaziantep, and these kinds of fear were also confirmed by IHD delegates from the other cities we were unable to visit .

A nice distinction between human rights observance inside and outside the OHAL was drawn by a member of the Elazig delegation to the IHD Congress in Ankara:

'Human rights violations in Tunceli [in the OHAL] and Elazig are just the same. There is no difference except that if the governor forbids any cultural activities in the OHAL, you cannot go to the Administrative Court to appeal against the decision.'" (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, pp. 16-17)

Reported use of landmines in southeastern Turkey (2000)

- Landmines casualties concentrate in the area of conflict between the Turkish Government and the PKK, and in border areas
- The rate of mine-related incidents decreased from 1995, with 25 persons killed in 2000 in the southeast

"There are reports of landmine casualties in Turkey, concentrated in the southeast and east where conflict between the Turkish government and the PKK has been most intense, as well as in border areas. The casualties involve both military personnel and civilians. In

August 1999, Prof. Serdar Necmioglu, chairman of the Medical Faculty Orthopedic and Traumatology Section of Dicle Hospital, stated that the number of patients admitted to that hospital for landmine-related injuries had reached 1,000 for the period between 1990 and 1999. He reported that the rate had increased during 1992-93, but slowed again following 1995. The injuries listed included chest trauma, abdomen, blood vessel and eye injuries in addition to orthopedic damage." (International Campaign to ban Landmines, August 2000)

"More than 25 persons - mainly children or military personnel - were killed by mines in the southeast; many more were maimed." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1a)

Kurdish men are more exposed to mistreatment during military service than other citizens (2000)

- 200,000 persons were reported to be in illegal situation regarding military service as of end of 1998

"Service conditions All men in Turkey 63 are obliged to do their military service from 1 January onwards in the year of their twentieth birthday, unless permission is obtained for a delay. The normal period of military service is 18 months. Workers abroad, if they can show they are working legitimately and for at least three years, may pay around DM10,000 and do one month's service.

[...]

No specific research seems to have been carried out regarding the treatment of Kurds during military service. The relevant points, perhaps, to be made are that service takes place in an extremely brutal environment; that it is an environment in which extreme right and nationalist wing values flourish, while democratic and left of centre values are on the defensive. As with any army, conscripts are very much at the mercy of the individuals who train them, both NCOs and officers. A Kurd, therefore, who serves under an officer or NCO who supports MHP will almost certainly have a much harder time than under a more democratically- minded person. It should also be borne in mind that since Kurdish nationalism, in the guise of the PKK, has posed the greatest threat to modern Turkey since its establishment in 1923, a very substantial collective prejudice has built up against Kurds generally within the army. As one military service protester, Ugur Yorulmaz, informed the mission: 'Kurds are at the bottom of the heap. They are very vulnerable to the abuse of power . The army is a microcosm of society, but it favours bullies. Who a conscript gets [as officer or NCO] is the luck of the draw.'

[...]

At the end of 1998 the number of those who had ignored their call- up papers or not applied to delay their service had reached 200,000 in Turkey and another 226,000 living abroad. With the need to raise money after the August 1999 earthquake, and possibly to deal with the backlog of evaders, those born in 1973 or before were offered the chance, for a short period, to buy their way out of full military service, on payment of DM15,000. There had been such amnesties before. An evader seeking to leave the country is unlikely to get beyond passport control unless he can demonstrate that he is going abroad for the purposes of study (language courses or university) and has delayed his military service

accordingly. Efforts to avoid military service generally mean avoiding various kinds of registration of residency and the impossibility of even obtaining various kinds of official documents like passports, or of subsequently renewing them. Without registration access to basic services like health and education for children and civil rights are effectively forfeit." (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, p. 44)

Freedom of movement

Travel inside the state of emergency provinces often restricted for security reasons (2000)

- Use of roadblocks has recently decreased

"Turkish citizens generally enjoy the freedom of movement domestically and the freedom to travel abroad. It is the constitutional right of a Turkish citizen to obtain a passport. This right is denied only in the case of a national emergency, civic obligations (military service, for example), or criminal investigation or prosecution. Within Turkey, travel outside the state of emergency provinces is not restricted. Travel inside the state of emergency provinces is often restricted for security reasons. Both the security forces and the PKK set up roadblocks in the region, although due to the improved security situation the use of roadblocks has decreased." (UK Home Office April 2001, para. 7.25)

Debate about the introduction of internal visas (1998-1999)

- Istanbul Mayor proposed creation of entrance visas to residents to prevent unwanted population growth (1998)
- Mayors and governors of large cities reportedly denied entry or summarily expelled internal migrants

"The Foreign Ministry official (quoted above saying that there are no displaced persons in Turkey), told USCR that in Ottoman times, the state controlled internal migration. She said, 'to prevent this exodus, some have suggested imposing an internal visa to enter Istanbul. We categorically reject this.'

The question of internal visas appears to be the subject of some controversy (although many Turkish citizens scoff at the debate as much ado about nothing, insisting that Turkey would never restrict internal rural-to urban migration). In August 1998, Istanbul mayor Recep Tayyip Erdogan said that Istanbul should issue entrance visas to residents to keep out unwanted migrants. He cited the proliferation of illegal construction in the city's shantytowns as one problem associated with the "artificial" population growth of Istanbul, which he said, numbers about 10 million. 'What I am talking about is not like the visas in international passports,' said Erdogan, 'but controlling entrance to the city through a travel document.'

Other mayors and governors have taken the law into their own hands, and denied entry or summarily expelled internal migrants. In July 1997, local officials in Van reportedly pushed back 270 people from Doganli village in Hakkari Province, the scene of intense conflict. Officials reportedly put them on buses and sent them back. Hurriyet, a Turkish daily newspaper, quoted an official from Van as saying, 'Our population has increased to 600,000 from 153,000 due to immigrants. We do not want any more trouble.'

In August 1998, Kemal Yazicioglu, the governor of Ordu, on the Black Sea coast, reportedly deported hundreds of Kurdish migrants and refused entry to hundreds more. 'Security troops are sending away truckloads of these workers at the [provincial] border,' a regional official said. He went on to say, 'The governor has banned all outside laborers because of concern that some workers could be members of the separatist organization,' a reference to the PKK.

'It's a disgrace,' Seyit torun, the mayor of Ulubey, a town of Ordu, complained to the Turkish daily newspaper Cumhuriyet. 'People who have spent three or four days on the back of a truck coming here, who arrive hungry and thirsty and looking for work, are arrested, taken to the district line, and sent back.'" (USCR 1999, p. 16)

Other concerns

Access to justice: Fear of retaliation prevents the displaced from reporting abuses (1999-2001)

- International NGOs report that Turkey has actively intimidated internally displaced people to prevent them from testifying about their situation
- The European Court of Human Rights has established in several cases that displaced persons had been discouraged by Turkish authorities to exercise their petition right

"The USCR researcher found most Kurds he encountered in the southeast to be fearful of being discovered speaking to him about their situation. Finding internally displaced persons willing to talk was not easy. Often, assessing whether or not they were speaking forthrightly was even more difficult. In a few instances, where USCR was able to visit the displaced in private quarters where they felt secure, they sharply criticized the government, blaming it (soldiers and police) for their displacement, and expressed discontent with their current situation. More often, it was not possible to establish such interview conditions. Under circumstances where people were interviewed in more public surroundings without adequate confidentiality, they praised the government, condemned the PKK, and expressed satisfaction with their situation. This is not to say that their testimony was untrue. Given the radically different testimonies, however, caution is needed in assessing any claims.

Turkey has actively intimidated internally displaced people to prevent them from testifying about the causes and consequences of their displacement. In particular, the European Court of Human Rights has determined that the Turkish government has sought to prevent displaced persons from testifying before the European Commission of Human Rights (ECHR) regarding allegations that Turkey violated the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. On September 16, 1996, in the case *Akdivar et al. v. Turkey* (Council of Europe-European Court of Human Rights document 99/1995/ 605/693), the Court ruled that the Turkish authorities exerted 'illicit and unacceptable pressure' on the applicants to withdraw their petitions. The applicants were villagers who alleged that Turkish security forces evacuated and destroyed their village following a PKK attack.

Human Rights Watch has encountered similar difficulties. HRW has documented the problem of convincing internally displaced persons whose rights have been abused to report such abuses. In bringing complaints of human rights violations before the ECHR, HRW cites the Commission as saying that applicants' fears of retaliation for reporting abuses cannot be discounted. HRW quotes Mahmut Sakar, chairman of the Human Rights Association of Diyarbakır about a complaint brought to the ECHR on the burning of the village of Lice and the expulsion of its inhabitants:

We apply to the Commission, which sends the application to the government. For example, we file an application on the burning of the village of Lice, they send the application to the Gendarme, who then call the villagers. They ask them, "Did you do this?" and they reply, "No, we love the state." We claim that the Gendarme has burned a village, and it is the Gendarme that is asked to assist in the investigation. In my opinion, 90 percent of the applicants from this region have been threatened. I know most of the cases from around here. Most realize the best way to survive is to shut up.

During USCR's site visit, another lawyer spoke to this issue. 'My own village was burned, it is now empty,' he said. 'I tried to get the people from my village to apply to the European Commission. They refused out of fear and because of threats.' Closely related to the sense of fear, are other forms of psychological trauma associated with loss and failure. Passing an elderly man in traditional dress sitting alone on a sidewalk stool in Van, a local resident traveling with the USCR researcher commented, 'That man, in normal times, would be in his home, surrounded by family, supported by his children and grandchildren.' The loss of dignity takes an enormous toll. The man who ran a local humanitarian organization devoted to assisting displaced persons (until the authorities closed it down) spoke bitterly about this:

After forced migration, people feel alone, left out. A person who was a leader in his own village now sells tomatoes in the street. He sends his daughter or wife to another house as a servant. He has no more pride. All he does is try to make ends meet. People look for food in the garbage. They live in barns and tents. The authorities have achieved their aim to strip away their personalities and their pride. They are trying to create a nation of bowed heads, like sheep.

The fear does not end after fleeing one's village or town. Most displaced persons interviewed by USCR had fled multiple times, usually citing a pervasive sense of insecurity as the reason for moving on." (USCR 1999, p. 10)

See also "Domestic law applying to compensation for property loss: no effective remedies (2001)" [Internal link]

See also following judgements of the European Court of Human Rights regarding violations of the individual right of petition:

- *Akdivar et al. v. Turkey (Application no. 21983/93), 16 September 1996 [Internet]*
- *Dula v. Turkey (Application no. 25801/95), 30 January 2001 [Internet]*

SUBSISTENCE NEEDS (HEALTH NUTRITION AND SHELTER)

General

Shelter needs of the displaced have not been addressed adequately (1998-2001)

- Evicted villagers were rarely provided with emergency shelters by authorities
- The displaced have often concentrated in slums in outskirts without adequate infrastructure and services
- Construction plans rarely benefit the displaced population
- Extended kinship relations of Kurds in southeastern Turkey have allowed the displaced to find a shelter with extended family members

"Along with unemployment, the absence of affordable housing is a critical problem. A Kurdish lawyer commented, 'There is no public housing in Turkey; there are no housing rights here. The migrants are forbidden to live in the slums, but if someone has no money, he has no choice. They cannot build houses on state property.'

Housing and shelter needs should be examined in two phases: First, as the urgent need for shelter in the immediate aftermath of displacement, including accommodation in tents or collective facilities; second, the longer-term needs for decent housing for people rendered homeless by the conflict who cannot return in the foreseeable future. Because the violence in populated areas decreased significantly in 1998 and 1999, the need for emergency, temporary housing has declined as well, compared to several years ago. In its study of displacement in 1994 in Tunceli and western Bingöl, the Netherlands Kurdistan Society observed:

According to Minister [of Interior Nahit] Mentefle's statement in parliament, the government had in 1993 supplied 500 families with substitute housing. He was probably referring to the pre-fabricated emergency dwellings that are commonly sent to the region following earthquakes (which occur frequently in eastern Turkey). We are not aware of any group of evicted villagers before the autumn of 1994 being given such dwellings, nor other forms of compensation. Virtually all evacuees of whom we are aware had to find a new place to stay by themselves. (In this respect, the village evacuations in Tunceli were exceptional, for here the government did provide some of the evacuees with shelter and even compensation...).... Some families were reported living in tents around the town of Ovacık, others were lodged in a few public buildings. The government erected emergency dwellings for some of the homeless near Ovacık, but it was doubted whether these simple structures would be able to withstand the severe winter.⁷⁰

Emergency shelter per se—or even more permanent dwellings—is only part of the problem. Since the displaced congregate in the *gecekondular* ['huts built in one night', in slums in the outskirts of cities], which, by their very nature, the government seems to

consider a blight unworthy of efforts to improve them, a host of infrastructural needs go unmet. In the quarter of Mersin where the displaced live, USCR heard complaints of uncollected garbage, potholes, and mosquito infestations. In April 1996, the Habitat International Coalition (HIC) sent a fact-finding mission to Turkey to assess housing conditions for the displaced. The report found:

The urban areas to which the displaced Kurds have fled are completely neglected by the Turkish authorities. In both Diyarbakır and Istanbul, HIC found neighborhoods without access to potable water, adequate sanitation facilities, and electrical connections.

The 1997 Turkish Parliamentary Commission report includes a letter from the OHAL governor, dated November 11, 1997, stating that 5,524 houses were built to accommodate displaced persons, including 693 in central Diyarbakır, 932 in Hakkari, 2,767 in Sirnak, 175 in Tunceli, 152 in Van, 258 in Bingöl, 62 in Bitlis, 465 in Mardin, and 465 in Mufl. Although the government has constructed some housing, displaced persons and others told USCR that occupancy is part of the reward system tied to the village guard structure. A man in Diyarbakır told USCR that in his city 'the government built 500 cottage houses for migrants, but they gave them all to village guards. Some flats were built that were supposed to be for poor people, but now professionals who can afford the rents are living in them. Rents are astronomical.'

USCR observed a construction boom in areas on the periphery of the conflict zone, particularly in Sanliurfa, on the outskirts of Mersin, and in Mersin itself. USCR noted scores of apartment buildings in various stages of construction. Although the city is overcrowded and has a teeming slum of Kurdish migrants, it is unclear whether the construction boom will benefit the displaced population. Mersin, located on the Mediterranean coast, is establishing itself as a tourist center, attracting busloads of Syrians." (USCR 1999, pp. 19-20)

"[T]he forced migration connected with the conflict in southeastern Turkey has been chaotic and unorganized. Only the extended kinship relations of Kurds in southeastern Turkey have prevented a larger crisis, allowing the displaced to find a shelter with extended family members. Individuals who flee or are forced out of their villages in southeastern Turkey haphazardly sought refuge in already overburdened provincial towns and cities within the region or in Turkey's teeming western urban centres." (HRW June 1996, Summary)

For more on the conditions in the slums, see also "The Southeast in the slums: Izmir's slums no different from Ethiopia", Turkish Daily News, 24 January 2001 [[Internet](#)] and "The Southeast in the slums: Uninvited guests at chicken farm", Turkish Daily News, 25 January 2001 [[Internet](#)]

The vast majority of the displaced persons are considered a population at risk from the public health point of view (1998-1999)

- Free public health clinics do not provide adequate level of care to the displaced Kurdish population
- Displaced persons cannot afford to buy prescribed medicines
- The southeast lags behind the rest of Turkey in several important indicators of health care
- The nutritional status of the displaced population is borderline

"Inadequate health care is also a problem. There are free government health clinics throughout Turkey, but displaced persons criticize them. USCR heard complaints about long waits and substandard care at these clinics, and about clinic doctors who do not speak Kurdish. Efforts to establish private, nonprofit clinics targeted to displaced Kurds have been frustrated. In 1996, the Diyarbakir Physicians' Association published a booklet entitled *Forced Migrants: Social, Economic, and Health Situation in the Area of Diyarbakir*. The doctors wrote that 'health comes out as the most negative indicator' of the rapidly growing urban population and lack of infrastructure. They attributed health problems to overcrowded living conditions, malnutrition, insufficient and dirty drinking water, improper disposal of sewage and garbage, and previous trauma resulting in psychological disorders. They also said that even if the displaced are treated for ailments and diseases, they cannot afford to buy prescribed medicines.

Many health professionals have left the area, the doctors report, leaving a shortage of doctors and nurses. They said that of 112 health clinics that once served the area, only 15 were currently functioning. The southeast lags behind the rest of Turkey in several important indicators of health care. The Diyarbakir doctors report that 70 percent of births in the southeast are not assisted by medical personnel, compared to 15 percent unassisted births in the rest of Turkey. Malaria, they report, is twice as common in the southeast than in the rest of the country. There were 1,184 cases of malaria cases reported in Diyarbakir in 1990; in 1994, 32263 cases were reported.

The Diyarbakir physicians also report an increase in the incidence of psychological disorders. Among the psychologically related complaints they report: headaches, ringing ears, breathing problems, chest pain, sweating, stomach aches, diarrhea, and constipation; in women, irregular menstruation and miscarriages; among children, bedwetting and 'fear and turning into themselves'. The Diyarbakir Physicians' Association concludes its report, declaring, 'If this condition continues, it will cover the whole country as a contagious disease. It will turn the cities into villages and harm social peace. It will increase economic loss and make health problems insoluble. The best solution is to erase the conditions that cause people to mitigate.'" (USCR 1999, p. 21)

"According to Médecins sans Frontières, the vast majority of [the] displaced persons are considered a population at risk from the public health point of view. Primary health care is severely deficient with an almost complete lack of medical services, which may be illustrated by the following statistics: while the average number of consultations per person per year in 1992 was 2.4 for the whole of Turkey, it was 0.26 in Diyarbakir. The infant mortality rate, which was officially 60 per 1000 for the whole country in 1990, was 87 per 1000 in Diyarbakir and 98 per 1000 in Hakkari in the same year. A number of communicable diseases such as typhoid, para-typhoid, trachoma, brucellosis and amoebic

dysentery are endemic throughout the region. The vaccination coverage is low and decreasing. The nutritional status of the displaced population is borderline." (COE 3 June 1998, para. 24)

Vulnerable groups

The vulnerability of displaced women in southeastern Turkey (1998-2001)

- Language problems make access to social services for Kurdish women more difficult
- High level of unemployment, poverty, inadequate shelter seriously affect women's health condition
- Research done among displaced women revealed symptoms such as headaches, sleeping disorders and extreme timidity
- The Batman Bar Association identified asserted forced displacement as one of the main reasons for the increasing suicide rates among women in southeastern Turkey
- Displaced men have more opportunity to socialize with other people and have more freedom while women live in isolation in their new residence

"There are tens of thousands of women in the region who do not know Turkish and only speak Kurdish. This leads to indescribable difficulties. Health and particularly that of women is beset by many problems. Language difficulties make it difficult for women to even go to the doctor. They have nightmares of being unable to tell their problems, of being misunderstood, of being chided and insulted. %64 percent of rural women and %50 percent of those living in urban areas have health problems. Infrastructural services such as roads, potable water, electricity and communication have great significance for mothers' health. The lack of water from wells and of potable water is also a great obstacle to the creation of a healthy environment.

Because of adverse conditions such as crowded living conditions, malnutrition, lack of heating installments, insufficient water, inadequate treatment of waste water, unemployment and poverty, diseases which would normally be easily treated turn today into contagious cases. The first people to be impacted are women whose bodies have been emaciated because of giving birth to too many children. And the children...

The health facilities, personnel and instruments in the region are inadequate. Add to this ignorance, and health emerges as a major problem.

Proportional distribution of contagious diseases (%)

Typhoid-paratyphoid 33.8

Dysentery 1.4

Jaundice 6.4

Lung tuberculosis 9.8

Malaria 26.3

Psychological problems created by migration

It is common to see psychological problems following migration. The most salient characteristic of the migrations is that they take place because of security reasons and are forced. "There are a number of findings to suggest that forced migrations are a cause of trauma and lead to post traumatic stress disorders." (Post-traumatic Stress Disorders and Other Psychological Problems Resulting from Internal Migration in the Southeast, Master's Thesis, Gaziantep University Medical Faculty Psychiatry Department Associate Professor Doctor AYTEKIN S. [sic])

Research revealed symptoms such as headaches, sleeping disorders and extreme timidity. The frequent recollection of the traumatic event, its reenactment in daily life or in dreams, the shunning of people and emotions recalling the traumatic experience and alienation. Others are a decrease in emotional capability, unwillingness to respond to questions, extreme nervousness and producing abrupt responses. Some people get addicted to alcohol or drugs. As a result, there is no longer a need to ask why girls commit suicide or migrant children inhale paint thinner or glue. The need to cure posttraumatic stress disorders is obviously acute." (Turkish Daily News 5 April 2001)

High level of suicide rate among women in southeastern Turkey

"The finding of a research carried out by Batman Bar Association in March, asserted forced displacement [as] one of the main reasons for the suicide acts that have been intensified in the region for a while. In the research it was found out that, most of the people who committed suicide were those who have been forced to migrate to Batman since 1985." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey March 2001, sect. 2)

"Immigration: Motive behind women suicide in Southeast

- The Batman Bar Association report says there is a connection between the suicide attempts and the feelings of isolation, despair, hopelessness and alienation

According to a report prepared by the Batman Bar Association, the motive behind the increasing suicide attempts among women is immigration and its repercussions, the Anatolia news agency reported on Monday.

The Batman Bar Association has conducted a survey in an effort to find the reasons for suicides by women in the Southeast region.

'The reasons behind the increasing suicides that were covered by the local and national press remain unknown. In the last two years, 42 of the 135 suicide attempts ended with death. Ninety-eight of those who attempted to commit suicide were female. It is observed that a large majority of those women had immigrated to cities from villages,' the report stated.

The report said there is a connection between the suicide attempts and the feelings of isolation, despair, hopelessness and alienation. Those who immigrated to the big cities feel that they do not belong to their new habitats. Reports said that Southeastern women who immigrated to bigger cities believe that in their small villages they had their own identity and their own way of living.

The report also noted that male immigrants have more opportunity to socialize with other people and have more freedom while women live in isolation in their new residence.

'There are no social activities for young girls who immigrated from the Southeast to big cities. For them, life is limited within the walls of their houses and they feel the pressure of strict traditions that limit their lives,' the report stated. (Turkish Daily News 13 March 2001)

Limited access of displaced children to housing, health services and education (2001)

- UN Child Committee invites Turkey to assess the situation of the displaced children in more detail

"The Committee expresses its concern at the higher number of internally displaced children in Turkey, who were forced to leave their homes towns in the 1990s owing to the high level of violence in the south-east region. The Committee is also concerned about their limited access to housing, health services and education.

In line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (E/CN.4/1998/53/Add.2), the Committee recommends that the State Party ensure that internally displaced children and their families have access to appropriate health and education services and adequate housing. Further, it invites the State party to collect data and statistics in order to know how many children are displaced and what their needs are with a view to developing adequate policies and programmes." (Committee on the Rights of the Child 8 June 2001, paras. 59-60)

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

General

Displaced families cannot afford to send their children to school (1999)

- Children are sent out on the streets

"One of the doctors in Diyarbakır commented on the effect of forced migration on disrupting education, saying, 'Education is gradually getting lost. People who leave their villages can't make the least use of the education they had. Not being able to adjust in their new residences, migrants discontinue their education and fall into ignorance.'

Many of the problems displaced children face are common to the poor in Turkey generally. Although Turkey provides for free public education, students must buy their own books, notebooks, and pay other school fees. Many displaced (and non-displaced) Kurdish children cannot afford these basic educational tools, and do not go to school.

During USCR's visit to Van, the researcher visited a local tourist attraction (although tourists rarely make it to Van, the closest Turkish town to the Iranian border). A couple of primary-school-age Kurdish boys provided their services as 'guides'— which meant a singing accompaniment as the researcher climbed the Van fortress. Although the boys were beggars and had a vested interest in telling a sad tale, their story focused specifically on the opening of school several weeks hence, and their fear that they could not attend without the proper school supplies. It was a problem confirmed by others.

An official in Silopi told USCR, 'Our schools are overcrowded. Lots of people can't afford to send their children to school. Because of economic problems, they can't buy paper, books, and uniforms.' Many of the poor see education as a luxury they cannot afford. 'Poverty causes families to send their children out on the street; street vending becomes their vocation,' wrote Dr. Necdet pekyüz in a 1996 article on internal migration in southeastern Turkey." (USCR 1999, p. 22)

Shortage of educational infrastructure in southeastern Turkey (2000)

- Many local schools have been closed in the state of emergency region
- Population influx from rural areas has caused severe overcrowding in urban schools and chronic teacher shortages

"In contrast to the national average of 45 children per classroom, there are typically 60 to 90 children per classroom in eastern and southeastern provinces and as many as 80 to 100 in Diyarbakir (most schools in the southeast employ a shift schedule for classes to

accommodate the large numbers). According to the Government, in the southeast there was a noticeable improvement in the number of students able to attend classes, partly due to improved availability of teachers and schools, and partly due to the requirement for an 8-year education. During the 1999 to 2000 school year, there were 270,000 students in secondary education in the southeast, compared to 240,000 the year before. In the state of emergency region, 450 schools are closed, although none were closed during the year. Although the Government has built boarding schools in the region's larger towns, these new schools have not met the demand. Although schools remained open in most urban centers in the southeast, rapid migration led to severe overcrowding of city schools and chronic teacher shortages. Despite a longstanding tradition of boarding schools in the rural areas of the country, some Kurdish leaders have expressed concern that the Government constructed boarding schools, rather than rebuild local schools, in order to accelerate the process of Kurdish assimilation. According to press reports, soldiers in one command of the state of emergency region repaired 167 village schools in preparation for the 2000 to 2001 academic year and during the past year spent about \$700,000 (300 million TL) on health, education, and infrastructure projects in the region." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

See also "Price of getting an education", Turkish Daily News, 1 February 2001 [[Internet](#)]

ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Self-reliance

Self-help organisations: the example of the Mersin Migrants' Association (Goc-Der) (1997-2001)

- The association provides medical and legal services to the displaced
- Turkish authorities have ordered the closure of the association on several occasions

"Some degree of self-help organization has emerged - for example, the U.S. Department of State Report [1997] noted that a first Kurdish NGO to assist internally displaced people in the South East has been established in Mersin. The Mersin Migrants' Association is said to provide medical and legal services to the displaced, negotiate contracts for migrant labourers and serve as an informal ombudsman for Kurdish migrant with the Government." (Graham-Brown April 1998, sect. 2.3)

"The Mersin Migrants' Association (Goc-Der), which was shut down in 1998, in February 1998, in February was given written permission by the Mersin governor to reopen. The Kurdish-led organization assists migrants from the southeast. Goc-Der had been closed pending a verdict in a case accusing its founders of several technical violations of Turkey's Associations Law and of possession of illegal publications. In December 1999, a court acquitted the defendants of all but one minor charge and fined them \$2 (1,5 million TL)". (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 4)

For more information on activities of the Mersin Migrants' Association, see "Tented city in Torbali", Turkish Daily News 27 January 2001 [[Internet](#)]

Displaced persons in southeast Anatolia face adverse economic conditions (2001)

- Over 60% of the Kurdish population in the south-east region live below the poverty line compared to approximately 30 % in other regions
- Most of the displaced persons have difficulty adapting in an urban environment in a depressed economical context
- No welfare system appears to operate on behalf of destitute internally displaced persons and other vulnerable, unemployed people
- Systematic destruction of the infrastructure, economic resources, livestock, crops, houses, tractors have made return and resettlement hardly sustainable

"Turkey ranks high among countries with a severe problem of regional inequality. As such, it is burdened with the economic and political dimensions of this reality which is an important part of the Eastern-Southeastern problems. Passing years have only widened

the gap. The difference between Kocaeli in the west, the city which has the highest Gross National Product (GNP) per capita in Turkey, and Mus, which has the lowest, is 1 to 11.

The most well-off cities of the east and southeast are Elazig, Malatya and Diyarbakir. However, even these cities fall short of the national average per capita income. The poorest cities of Turkey and the region are Mus, Agri, Bitlis and Bingol. In these cities, the GNP per capita is below that of many countries in Africa.

The income gap

As we already saw, the per capita income of the poorest city in the region is only one-eleventh of that of an industrial center in the west. The region as a whole ranks last in economic growth and development. It also gets the smallest share from the national disposable income, and has considerable pools of poverty. Using the State Statistical Institute (SIS) figures, we get the following picture:

In the region where subsistence agriculture is still prevalent, land inequality is at monstrous proportions, the climate is harsh, and where for the past 15 years an off-and-on civil war has been fought, is home to 1.947 million families or 14.5 percent of all families in the nation. On the other hand, the region uses only 10.2 percent of the national income. In the region, the average income per family is \$3,851, 30 percent below the national average.

The region's per family income is 43 percent below the Marmara and Aegean regions where the figure is \$6,834, and 66 percent behind Istanbul where it is \$11,637.

The richest province in the area is Erzurum, where the average income per family is \$6,067. This figure is 10 percent above the national average. Another important center in the area is Malatya where average income is \$4,600. The average income per family in Diyarbakir is \$3,567. It is interesting that Gaziantep, usually considered the most economically developed city in the region ranks below Diyarbakir at \$3,400." (Turkish Daily News 15 July 2001)

"To state it briefly, 38 percent of peasant families in the region are landless. This ratio goes up to 48 percent in Sanliurfa where there is the highest concentration of land ownership, and to 45 percent in Diyarbakir. While 5 percent of families own 65 percent of the land, a vast majority of 70 percent own only 10 percent. Despite having been targeted by successive governments for land reform programs that were invariably undermined by local powerholders, there are still entire villages owned by individuals or families." (Turkish Daily News 15 July 2001)

"Most of the displaced persons USCR encountered had been engaged in husbandry and small-plot agriculture before their displacement, but are now living in urban settings. USCR visited slum areas in several cities that were comprised almost entirely of Kurdish migrants. Although some migrants have adapted and found work in construction, transportation, or other urban pursuits, many others, particularly among those who were

adults when they were displaced, have not been able to adapt. The conflict has disrupted the region's economy. Agriculture and husbandry served the region's cities, and city dwellers commented on high prices and shortages of meat and other staples that once were plentiful.

One man told USCR, 'Old people are especially poor. No charities help them. There are no private organizations that work on their behalf. We have no money to eat meat. We never eat meat.' Meat is central to the diet in this region, but the husbandry sector has been decimated.

No welfare system appears to operate on behalf of destitute internally displaced persons and other vulnerable, unemployed people." (USCR 1999, pp. 18-19)

"Another serious problem results from the disastrous economic and social situation of the whole region. Systematic destruction of the infrastructure, economic resources, livestock, crops, houses, tractors etc. have made large areas of the region uninhabitable. The region has always suffered from a lower level of economic and social development than other parts of Turkey; the conflict has much increased this gap. The rate of illiteracy is 35 % in the Kurdish regions, whereas at the national level it is 19,3%; over 60% of the Kurdish population in the south-east region live below the poverty line compared to approximately 30 % in other regions, and the mortality rate is 50% higher than in other parts of the country. Before mass return could be foreseen, measures to revive the local economy would have to be undertaken." (COE 3 June 1998, para. 37)

See also: Turkish Daily News, "Economy goes from bad to worse in Turkey's southeast", Turkish Daily News, 7 April 2001 [Internet]

Displaced Kurds face social and economic exclusion in western cities (2000)

- Displaced Kurds are dependent on other Kurds for lodging and employment
- Only a small proportion of the displaced Kurds have acquired an income above or on a level with subsistence
- Kurds displaced from the countryside lack the skills for urban life and are among the worst-off economically in Turkey
- Displaced persons often try to make a living as street vendors but risk eviction by authorities
- Kurds are reluctant to register in their new places of residence and thus cannot access the few social services available

"Social and Economic exclusion Displaced Kurds also believe they face economic and social discrimination. They are identifiable by their speech and by their demeanour. We repeatedly heard that displaced families were turned down by Turkish landlords or employers, and were dependent on Kurds for lodging or employment. We met approximately 20 displaced villagers. Most of these displaced villagers expressed either extreme difficulty in finding work, or in several cases they reported discrimination whereby employers/landlords preferred to employ or rent to Turks rather than Kurds. The

upshot was that several reported that they were street vendors (of whom there is already a serious glut) or that they sifted through rubbish to find something recyclable. Or that they finally were only able to rent a dwelling (all too frequently simply a shanty) through someone also 'from the East'. We saw examples of wood and plastic shanty dwellings. Research reportedly carried out by IHD Istanbul in 1994 or 1995 indicated that barely 5 per cent of those displaced by war acquire an income above or on a level with subsistence. We greatly doubt that the situation for the displaced has improved since then.

In August 1999 Turkey was devastated by a major earthquake, the epicentre of which was not far from Izmir. This is what a Turkish (*not* Kurdish) UN staff worker reported shortly afterwards:

'There was great discrimination in the earthquake area. The poor and Kurdish people were put in the worst parts of the earthquake camp in the most muddy areas. Consequently many chose to camp in the earthquake ruins. UNICEF was helping in the worst areas, where the people were the very poor or they were Kurds, until 27 th August. On that day the local government banned UNICEF from going there [the areas where the very poor and the Kurds were]. They were only allowed to provide relief services with a police escort. So certain staff went there secretly. There were many elderly and children who did not speak Turkish, only Kurdish. The police would behave in a very hostile manner to them.'

It goes without saying that those forcibly displaced from the countryside are among the worst-off economically in Turkey. They are often reduced to penury, particularly since they lack the skills for urban life. An IHD delegate from Iskenderun informed us that many displaced persons had been driven out of the city by a prohibition on unlicensed street vendors some four or five years ago. They simply could not survive, so they moved to Adana, Mersin and similar places. The 20,000 or so displaced persons still in Iskenderun remain closely watched by the security forces. 'They cannot say they are Kurdish, they do not dare say who they are, or that their villages are burnt.'

Turkey is reportedly among the top five countries with the greatest disparity in income distribution. Displaced Kurds, one must take it, are among the more needy for state assistance. It is possible to register for certain benefits, for example free medical care, if one is unemployed. In order to avail oneself of these benefits one must be in possession of a 'Green Card'. This, naturally, is only obtainable if one is registered with the *muhtar*. The last port of call while collecting the requisite official approval is the police station. It is therefore unsurprising that a substantial number of displaced Kurds consider the Green Card inaccessible because they fear that instead of acquiring a Green Card they will instead be candidates for police mistreatment. We repeatedly met families needing one but unwilling to pay this price.

Those in greatest need of State assistance are often those for whom least provision is made. Gaziosmanpasa [Istanbul neighbourhood] has no hospital of its own. Because of the lack of State health services private clinics operate in the area. In the words of one health professional:

'Public health is very poor so there is a huge incidence of infection as a result of overcrowding. Three years ago there was no TB. Today it is quite common. The police tried to close us (a clinic) in 1995. We resisted the pressure and they left us alone.' " (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, pp. 24-25)

For information on the social-economic condition of the displaced in Turkish western cities, see also "Discrimination an obstacle to finding work", Turkish Daily News, 26 January 2001 [Internet]

Displaced women in southeastern Turkey can hardly cope with their new situation (2001)

- Displacement has aggravated the effects of low status of women in Kurdish society

"A scientific research project carried out by the Coordination Bureau for Rural Development of the Turkish Development Foundation and financed by the Bureau of Development for the GAP Region has documented the catastrophic social situation of the women living in this part of southeastern Turkey.

The Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) - the largest development project in Turkish history - aims to build twenty-four dams and seventeen hydroelectric power stations along the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in order to further the economic development of the region through irrigation and energy production for industry.

The population of the affected provinces - Diyarbakir, Adiyaman, Gaziantep, Mardin and Sanliurfa - is primarily Kurdish. The research project surveyed a total of 3,871 women living in 81 villages in this region and representing 900 households.

According to the survey, the average age at which girls were married off was 17 years. Of the women questioned, 36.9% were under the age of 15 when they married. 44.7% of the women had married a man from their own tribe and 52.4% had married a relative. The overwhelming majority of these marriages are arranged by the girl's parents and other relatives.

The women's educational level was very low. 76.4% of the women were illiterate. Of the remaining 23.6%, 6.3% could only read and write, 16.6% had finished primary school and only 1% had attended secondary schools. The GAP project, begun in the late Seventies, has been consistently criticized for its failure to benefit the local population. The infrastructure has not been improved and any economic benefits have flowed into the pockets not of the local farmers but the large landowners, construction companies and Turkish and foreign investors. (Cumhuriyet, 2.8.00; IMK)" (InfoTurk August 2000)

"The rapid rural migration during the last decade, the increasing population density and the apparent permanence of the migrants... People have stepped into a new environment

and culture, not to say another life, as a result of migration. Compulsory migration had a negative impact on women. Some of the consequences are follows.

- They were stripped away from agriculture, and their activities were limited to their homes.
- They have problems associated with level of literacy and language.
- Adverse migration conditions exacerbated health problems.
- They were distanced from the traditional environment and relatives and were alienated from the social environment.
- Collective living arrangements increased with migration.
- Women lost their expectations after being stripped from their homes and with the future being shrouded in ambiguity.
- Expectations are backward-oriented (like returning to the village)
- They are torn between the conservation of old values and their transformation.

Under these unusual, cruel and isolated conditions, women experience fear, suspicion, depression and tension. Urban women have now understood that the troubles of migrant women can only be solved in concert, and their struggles have converged. The longing of the women of the Southeast is to build a new life over the losses, to again plant pistachio trees in evacuated villages, to see that animal flocks grazing in pastures, to understand and experience the change process that started with the Southeast Anatolian Project (GAP)." (Turkish Daily News 5 April 2001)

See also "The vulnerability of displaced women in southeastern Turkey (1998-2001)" [Internal link]

Poverty and juvenile delinquency: displaced children in southeastern cities: (2001)

- Increasing number of street children in cities in southeastern Turkey as a result of displacement and migration
- Children are also expected to work to contribute to their family incomes
- Displaced children are disproportionately represented among criminal cases involving minors

"In another research carried out by Tigris University Department of Psychology, it was found out that migration from the rural areas to the urban settlements increased the number of children making their lives on the streets. In the research carried out with the aim of determining the socio-cultural and economic conditions of the 'street children' in Diyarbakir and 'children on the streets' in the city, the number of these two categories of children are found as approximately 6 thousands, 98% of whom are internally displaced children, and 16% of whom have been detained at least once on several occasions. The research further found out that 35% of the 'children on the streets' do not have identity cards, and 93% of them have above 5 siblings. The followings were stated in the research report:

"The physical developments of these children are behind that of their peers. Likewise, their areas of interest and the way they respond to the events are considerably different

that those of their peers. They have to work in order to contribute to their family incomes. This on the one hand prevents them from acting like other children and the demising attitudes displayed by their environments compel them to see themselves as adults. Since that they encounter many difficulties in their daily lives, they have many psychosocial problems. In order to get rid of these problems, the socioeconomic and cultural conditions of the families should be investigated in detail, their needs should be determined, the parents should be provided with jobs with enough wages and after all they should not be allowed to send their children for work on the streets." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey March 2001, sect. 2)

"Displaced children resorting to crime

Research by Diyarbakir branch of Contemporary Lawyers Association shows that displaced children are more inclined to commit crime

The migration from villages to towns has reportedly increased the inclination to commit crimes, especially among children. Experts state that the highest increase has been in petty theft and point out that the items most stolen are soft drinks and chocolate. One lawyer from the Diyarbakir branch of the Contemporary Lawyers Association (CHD) Mahsum Bati has prepared a report called 'Migration and the Children Criminals it Creates' in which he notes striking findings concerning displaced families.

Petty theft in the first place

Bati drew up his report using 606 case files seen at the Diyarbakir courts in the first six months of this year into criminals aged under 18. Pointing out that the most common charge was petty theft, Bati stated that all the 246 children referred to the courts on this charge came from displaced families.

They cannot fit in

Stating they had determined that 98.3 percent of the children have problems adapting their new environment and that 79,9 percent are undernourished, Bati said: 'Unable to stand going hungry, they resort to stealing things. They go after Coke, chocolate and gum more than anything else. Some 91.6 percent of their families cannot find lasting employment.' He went on to say that 40.7 percent of the children did not go to school." (Turkish Daily News 7 August 2001)

Access to high pastures is subject to official authorisation (2000-2001)

- Landmines also hampers the access to pastures

"Provincial authorities deny villagers access to some high pastures for grazing, citing security concerns, but have allowed other villages access to their high pastures." (U.S.DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

"Governors of Bitlis Uur Boran issued a decree in April [2001], declaring that the ban on the summer ground within the provincial borders of Bitlis is lifted and the stockbreeders would be allowed to use provincial summer-grounds and pasturages from 1 May 20001 to 31 October. The decree noted that, the shepherds, and herdsman had to be registered in Bitlis provincial population register to use the summer-grounds and pasturages. Local sources stated that the decree could be interpreted as a hopegiving improvement, but people hesitate to walk up to the summer-grounds and pasturages since that the region has been full of mines." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey April 2001, sect. 2.1)

Participation

Political representation of ethnic minorities severely limited (1981-2001)

- Parties can only take seats in the National Assembly if they obtain at least 10% of the national vote
- Law forbids the use of languages other than Turkish in political campaigns
- Parties which claim that there are minorities based 'on national, religious, confessional, racial or language differences' are forbidden

"All activities by political parties were banned by the National Security Council (NSC) on 12 September 1980, and all parties were dissolved on 16 October 1981, prior to the formation of a Consultative Assembly. From May 1983 new parties were allowed to form, but their participation in the general election was subject to strict rules: each had to have 30 party founders approved by the NSC and party organisations in at least 34 of the provinces, while candidates for the election were also subject to veto by the military rulers. Legislation enacted in March 1986 stipulated that a party must have organisations in at least 45 provinces, and in two-thirds of the districts in each of these provinces, in order to take part in an election. Parties can only take seats in the National Assembly if they win at least 10% of the national vote.

In June 1992, the True Path and Social Democratic Populist parties sent proposals for the first 'instalment' of constitutional changes to all Turkey's opposition parties, whether represented in parliament or not. The changes proposed were generally in the direction of greater democracy. However, they were opposed by the Welfare [Refah] Party, and debates and votes in June 1995 showed that other religious and conservative hard-liners in ANAP and DYP were voting with the Refah Party. At the eleventh hour a slimmed down version was passed with all of the major parties voting for the package and only the Welfare Party voting against. The main elements were removal of language praising the 1980 coup from the Constitution, lowering the voting age and age at which people can join parties to 18 from 21 and allowing greater political participation by trade unions and civil associations.

The use of languages other than Turkish in political campaigns is forbidden by law. Additionally, a general prohibition exists against parties that claim that there are

minorities based 'on national, religious, confessional, racial or language differences'. Articles of the 1983 Political Parties Law state that political parties: (a) cannot put forward that minorities based on national, religious, confessional, racial or language differences exist in Turkey, (b) cannot advocate the goal of destroying national unity or be engaged in activities to this end by means of protecting, developing, or disseminating language or cultures other than the Turkish language and culture and thus create minorities in Turkey, and (c) cannot use a language other than Turkish. Election law forbids the use of any language other than Turkish in election campaigns. The Kurdish People's Labour Party (HEP) fell victim to these laws, as did the Democratic Mass Party (DKP). The indictment against the DKP illustrates the position of the government. The prosecutor did not argue that Kurds or other minorities do not exist, and in fact stated that such groups enrich society as a whole. However, the activities must be kept at the level of the individual and not demand group rights. Some parliamentary candidates have been prosecuted and convicted for using Kurdish at election rallies." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 7.1-7.3)

Kurdish political participation under close surveillance: the case of the HANEP party (1995-2001)

- The pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party is not represented in the National Assembly as it fails to obtain 10% of the national vote
- It is however very influential in the southeast where it controls several municipalities, including the regional capital Diyarbakir
- HADEP members are reportedly the object of arbitrary arrest and mystery killings and often harassed for the legal political activities
- A case for closure of HADEP is currently before the Constitutional Court

"The pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP) participated in the parliamentary elections in December 1995 and April 1999, but failed to obtain the necessary 10% of the national vote in order to gain any seats in the National Assembly. In 1999 they attracted 4.73% of the vote. Prior to the election HADEP stated that it would concentrate on winning control of local councils in the southeast at the simultaneous municipal and general elections. It was successful in the local elections, taking control of some municipalities, including Diyarbakir. In October 1998, a Virtue Party (FP) deputy stated, 'There is no political influence in the (southeast) region other than that of the FP and HADEP.'

HADEP members are sometimes the object of arbitrary arrests and mystery killings and are often harassed in the southeast for their legal political activities. In February 1998, seven HADEP leaders were arrested on charges of being linked with the PKK. The case was initiated by a HADEP calendar which features pictures of separatist guerrillas. HADEP leaders have denied any links with the PKK. Depending on the outcome of the investigation, HADEP faces closure by the Constitutional Court. In September 1998, five of the defendants were released, including Murat Bozlak, the HADEP chairman, although

the investigation continues. Two of HADEP's predecessors, HEP and DEP, were closed by the Constitutional Court due to alleged collaboration with the PKK.

Following the detention of Abdullah Öcalan in Italy in November 1998 some HADEP members went on hunger strike in sympathy with the PKK leader. Others held illegal demonstrations and some threw Molotov cocktails. This led to widespread arrests of HADEP members through the end of November and December, with further arrests being made at protests against police actions against HADEP. HADEP put the number of detainees at the end of November as 3,064. Most were reportedly freed after a brief detention. HADEP leaders said that many of their party members were beaten and tortured during the government's crackdown on HADEP, and one 18 year old member died in custody. Following the hunger strikes on behalf of Öcalan and the issuing of a press release protesting against the request for his extradition, on 28 January 1999 the Ankara State Security Court Chief Prosecutor's Office filed a suit against 47 HADEP officials, including Bozlak. The indictment has requested prison terms between four and half years to seven and a half years. On 29 January 1999 the Chief Prosecutor of High Court of Appeals filed a suit against HADEP in the Constitutional Court calling for its closure and alleging an 'organic relation' between HADEP and the PKK. HADEP stated its intention to stand in the April 1999 general elections despite the pending lawsuit, and the Constitutional Court permitted it to do so.

The forcible return of Abdullah Öcalan to Turkey in mid-February 1999 was marked by public protests by his supporters, many of which became violent. There was a series of PKK bombings across Turkey. The unrest led to another round of arrests of HADEP members. Following the elections and a drop in PKK terrorist violence in summer 1999, government pressure on HADEP eased somewhat, although a case for closure of HADEP is currently before the Constitutional Court, and three HADEP mayors were arrested in February 2000." (UK Home Office April 2001, paras. 6.14-6.16)

DOCUMENTATION NEEDS AND CITIZENSHIP

Documentation needs

High proportion of Kurds who moved to cities remain unregistered (2000)

- The procedure to obtain ID cards exposes the displaced to security forces
- Remaining unregistered means having no access to health or education services

"Registration of residence All Turkish citizens are required by law to register with the neighbourhood *muhtar* or headman immediately on arrival in a new neighbourhood. We were struck by the number of informants in Istanbul, Adana and Gaziantep who told us either that they were unregistered, or that they had registered in one location but actually lived incognito elsewhere [...]. In other words they sought to be invisible.

It is an offence not to carry one's ID card, rendering one liable to three days' detention. If it is lost, another one must be obtained immediately from the ID office. A chit from the *muhtar* is necessary for this. According to a *muhtar* (see paragraph below), the ID office has a list of 'wanted' persons, supplied by the police. If a name comes up as 'wanted' the police are informed. Notification is also passed to the police or gendarmes at the place of birth. It is not only the officially 'wanted' category that is liable to detention. Many others are detained on suspicion. *Not* being on the 'wanted' list in no way implies one is safe.

Gaziosmanpasa is a well-known area of Istanbul with an Alevi and Kurdish concentration. We met Nevzet Altun, the *muhtar* [...]. He informed us that the registered population is approximately 80,000, but he reckoned the real population was in the order of 100,000, with 20 per cent of the population unregistered. He reckoned that the Alevi proportion of the population is between 40 and 50 per cent, while the Kurdish population is between 30-40 per cent. Presumably there is a large overlap between the two categories. Bearing in mind that it is those who *fear* the police who choose to remain unregistered and that these are most likely to be those displaced by the exigencies of war and have already seen plenty of police excesses, the unregistered population is like to be overwhelmingly Kurdish, with a minority of leftists, probably Alevi Turks also. One may conjecture therefore that the proportion of *Kurds* who are unregistered is well in excess of the *muhtar's* 20 per cent overall estimate, and may even exceed 40 per cent. It is not the role of the *muhtar* to submit registration rolls to the police. Rather, the police scrutinise these rolls whether the *muhtar* desires it or not. We received anecdotal confirmation of this in the offices of Goç-Der (The Migrants' Social and Solidarity Association). One staff member said of her arrival in Istanbul as a displaced person 'When I came to Istanbul I registered with the *muhtar* and gave my address. Then the police came and told me to sign every month at the police station.' Another said, 'I am here [Istanbul] eight years. I am still not registered with the *muhtar*. I cannot register as they will get my address and torture me. My family are military service evaders in Germany.'

People do not take the decision to remain unregistered lightly. Failure to register is not simply a means of remaining 'off the record', excluded from the population census, nor merely a matter simply of remaining excluded from the electoral roll. Remaining unregistered means having no access to health or education services. That price may not seem high for a bachelor in rude health. We repeatedly met families where children were not in school because the parents felt unable to take the risk of registration. If there was a health problem they had to find the money to go to a private clinic. The loss of education for one's children is a very high price indeed to pay, and it is not logical to think that displaced people would take this course of action unless they had real grounds for fear." (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, pp. 16-17)

ISSUES OF FAMILY UNITY, IDENTITY AND CULTURE

Cultural rights

Cultural rights of the Kurdish minority: insufficient improvements (2000-2001)

- A law that prohibited speech and printing in languages not officially recognized was abolished in 1991
- Newspapers and magazines published in Kurdish remain however subject to confiscation or police raids for suspected 'separatism'
- Licenses have not been issued for independent television or radio channels to broadcast in Kurdish
- Kurdish cannot be used as a language of instruction
- The Kurdish New Year has been adopted a Turkish national holiday but the right of assembly continues to be frequently denied

"According to the Turkish Foreign Ministry website, 'The status of minorities in Turkey has been internationally certified by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne, according to which there are only non-Muslim minorities in Turkey. It is wrong, according to this definition, to refer to our citizens of Kurdish descent as a 'Kurdish minority'. Besides, Turkey is a unitary State and 'Turkish citizenship' is an all embracing juridical concept encompassing all our citizens, granting them equal rights and obligations...'

It is clear, however, that the EU's Copenhagen criterion of 'respect for and protection of minorities' should be applied not only to the Jewish, Greek and Armenian minorities defined by the Treaty of Lausanne, but also to the Assyrians, Kurds, Laz, Roma and many other minorities in Turkey.

The 1990s saw a considerable liberalization in the area of language policy in Turkey. A law that prohibited speech and printing in languages not officially recognized was abolished in 1991. In 2000, several newspapers and magazines were published in minority languages - although those produced in Kurdish were frequently subject to confiscation or police raids for suspected 'separatism.'

In a test case in March [2000] concerning a child that had been given a Kurdish name, the Supreme Court ruled that children could legally be given names of non-Turkish origin.

Broadcasting and education, however, remained under dispute in 2000. The 1994 Law on the Television and Radio Organisations and their Broadcasts mandated the exclusive use of the Turkish language except in certain circumstances. On the basis of this law, licenses were not issued for television or radio channels to broadcast in Kurdish. Interestingly, the only media outlet to broadcast in the Kurdish language was the Dicle Sesi (Voice of the

Tigris) radio channel, run by the armed forces, virtually acknowledging that many who lived in the southeast were unable to understand Turkish.

Turkish remained the official - though not exclusive - language of instruction, according to Article 42.9 of the Constitution. On the basis of the 1983 Foreign Language Education and Teaching Law, the National Security Council decided which foreign languages may be taught in Turkey. While languages spoken outside of Turkey (e.g. English, Russian, Chinese, etc.) could be taught, Laz, Kurdish and Roma could not." (IHF 2001, p. 304)

"Kurds are able to assert their identity and culture significantly more than they could a decade ago. But the repeal of Law 2932 and the adoption of Newroz as a Turkish national holiday is less the result of a 'liberalisation' by the State than reluctant acquiescence in a profound shift in the terrain on which the Kurdish question is now contested. It is the *inability* of the State to contain Kurdish expression which has led to these concessions, which are still contested on the ground by members of the security forces and the judiciary. Cultural repression continues, frequently [...], in violent, bizarre and ludicrous ways. There is a long way to go before the freedom of expression, assembly and association in cultural matters enjoy respect by the State. It remains obsessed with the need to control." (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, pp. 53-54)

Kurdish New Year celebrations (Newroz) (2000)

"In contrast to the previous year, the March 21 Kurdish Nevruz ('New Year') celebrations were marked by calm and respectful behavior among participants and security forces. According to press reports and initial contacts with activists in the southeast, the police detained several hundred unauthorized demonstrators in Mersin, Sanliurfa, Siirt, and Adana, but there were reportedly no arrests nor excessive use of force (as there had been in the previous year). The authorities for the first time granted permission for a major celebration a few miles outside of Diyarbakir. The gathering of more than 80,000 persons was peaceful, with no detentions, and police treated the crowd well, according to a Kurdish activist. Istanbul municipal authorities denied permission for a celebration there because the organizers referred to 'Newroz', the grounds that since there is no letter 'w' in Turkish, this was Kurdish spelling." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 2a)

About the celebrations of Newroz in 2001, consult the March 2001 report of the Human Rights Foundation in Turkey, sect. 1 [[Internet](#)]

PROPERTY ISSUES

General

Land of displaced villagers often confiscated by village guards (2001)

- Occupation of land by village guards is one of main obstacle to return
- Displaced risk retaliation by village guards when recouring to legal remedies
- Land occupations by village guards take place in a context of concentration of land property in southeastern Turkey

"One of the most serious obstacles for a return is the fact that the land belonging to the evacuated villages has been occupied by village guards. Sefika Gürbüz, chairwoman of the migrants' association Göç-Der, said that they had forwarded 17,914 petitions for a return to the villages to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT). Adding that those willing to return met with physical obstacles, she stated: 'In the first place these are obstacles directly deriving for the state of emergency. The second biggest obstacle are the village guards. The land of many villagers who left their homes has been confiscated by village guards. They are trying to prevent people from returning in order not to lose that land. The village-town project that was developed by Prime Minister Bülent Ecevit did not meet the expectations. Only village guards moved there, but the areas are not suitable for agriculture or cattle breeding and, therefore, the people have problems to make their living.' The former chairman of Göç-Der, Mahmut Özgür, said that the people who return to their villages are faced with a variety of problems. They have to establish a new order, must repair their homes and need money to buy animals. For all this they have to get compensation. Forced displacement is a problem that deeply affects Turkey's social, political and economic life. The illegal import of meat and the fraud termed 'Buffalo' can easily be linked to this problem. Before the forced displacement Turkey was exporting meat, but now has to import it." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey January 2001, sect. 2)

"Oppression and threats targeting the villagers who attempt to return their villages to settle or to work in their property continued. A few villagers attempted to utilise the remedies apparently available in theory. For instance, a villager named Kadri Yasa filed an official complaint with the Kocaköy Public Prosecutor" Office against the village guards for threatening him, for illegally possessing his own property and for cutting down thousands of his trees. He had been forced to emigrate from Kırmetaş village of Diyarbakır in 1995.

Efforts of internally displaced persons to resort to national remedies often put them into risk of at least getting threatened by, for instance, village guards." (Human Rights Foundation in Turkey February 2001, sect. 2)

"Many villages in the area have been under pressure by either the government to take arms and become korucu ('watchmen' armed by the army to fight the PKK) or pressurised by the PKK to attack those armed. Each person who fights the PKK gets 50,000 TL per month. Korucu tend to be either the very poor or from Agalar villages who were compelled by the Agar to fight. In these villages those who do not become Korucu leave and their land is cultivated by those who stay. For this reasons many villages have either migrated or been forced to leave their village.

Three types of villages are found in the area

- a) villages with small and medium sized farming. In these villages land tends to be of poor quality [...]
- b) Large Holdings and irrigated farming villages [...]
- c) **Aga** or landlord villages: these are characterised by the ownership and control/administration of only one Aga (landlords) or Sheikhs (a religious leader). A landlord might own one or a few villages. In the Ilisu area there are approximately 25 Aga. They tend to be tribal chiefs, but this is not always the case. There a number of villages where only one or relatively few families possess all cultivated land, with the ownership of some families extending beyond the boundaries of one village alone. In these villages land is of good quality reflecting high levels of access to circulating capital, water and machinery. The Aga has control over the village residents living in his villages and usually they all work for him. The Aga are the richest and the most politically influential in the region. Some do not always reside locally and chose to live in the cities or even abroad.

Another important feature of this region is that 35% of households are landless. Although their main income is from agriculture, they depend on working as wage labourers for large holdings and sharecropping for absentee landlords." (UK Government 22 December 2000, sect. 6.1)

Domestic law applying to compensation for property loss: no effective remedies (2001)

- Turkish Constitution and other domestic legal provisions require compensation for government actions causing loss of property or injury
- No proceedings can be brought against governors within the state of emergency area
- There is no example of compensation or prosecutions in cases of property destruction carried out by security forces, according to the European Court of Human Rights
- As a result of the situation of civil strife in southeastern Turkey, effective and accessible domestic remedies do not exist for complaints

"Turkish domestic law provides that citizens must be compensated for government actions that cause them loss of property or injury. In proceedings before the European Commission of Human Rights regarding a case of alleged forced evacuation and burning of a village by government security forces, the Turkish government submitted as relevant law Article 125 of the Turkish Constitution, which states, 'The administration shall be liable for damage caused by its own acts and measures.' This is not restricted by any state

of emergency or war, and does not necessarily require proof of a fault on the part of the administration. Article 1 of Law 2953 of October 25, 1983, states, moreover, that, 'actions for compensation in relation to the exercise of the powers conferred by this law are to be brought against the Administration before the administrative courts.'

"If these laws were enacted effectively, the number of petitions to the European Commission of Human Rights would be greatly reduced." (HRW June 1996, Turkey's legal obligations)

"Provisions on emergency measures

1. Extensive powers have been granted to the Regional Governor of the State of Emergency by decrees enacted under Law no. 2935 on the State of Emergency (25 October 1983), especially Decree no. 285, as amended by Decrees nos. 424 and 425, and Decree no. 430.

2. Decree no. 285 modifies the application of Law no. 3713, the Anti-Terror Law (1981), in those areas which are subject to the state of emergency, with the effect that the decision to prosecute members of the security forces is removed from the public prosecutor and conferred on local administrative councils. These councils are made up of civil servants and are under the authority of the provincial governors who also head the security forces.

3. Article 8 of Decree no. 430 of 16 December 1990 provides as follows:

'No criminal, financial or legal responsibility may be claimed against the State of Emergency Regional Governor or a Provincial Governor within a state of emergency region in respect of their decisions or acts connected with the exercise of the powers entrusted to them by this decree, and no application shall be made to any judicial authority to this end. This is without prejudice to the rights of individuals to claim indemnity from the State for damage suffered by them without justification.'

According to the applicant, this Article grants impunity to the Governors and reinforces the powers of the Regional Governor to order the permanent or temporary evacuation of villages, to impose residence restrictions and to enforce the transfer of people to other areas. Damage caused in the context of the fight against terrorism would be "with justification" and therefore immune from suit." (ECHR 30 January 2001, paras. 37-39)

"Regard must therefore be had in this case to the situation which existed in south-east Turkey at the time of the events complained by the applicant, which was characterised by violent confrontations between the security forces and members of the PKK (see the *Mentes and Others v. Turkey* judgement of 28 November 1997, Reports 1997-VIII, p. 2707, §58). In such a situation, as the Court has recognised in previous cases, there may be obstacles to the proper functioning of the system of the administration of justice (see the *Akdivar and Others v. Turkey* judgement, cited above, pp. 1211, §70)

The Court recalls that, despite the extent of the problem of village destruction, there appeared in these previous cases to be no example of compensation being awarded in

respect of allegations that property had purposely been destroyed by members of the security forces or for prosecutions having been brought against them in respect of such allegations. Furthermore, there had consistently been a general reluctance on the part of the authorities to admit that this type of practice by members of the security forces had occurred. The Government had provided no information since that would lead the Court to reach any different conclusion (see the *Selçuk and Asker v. Turkey* judgment, cited above, p. 908, §68).

Accordingly, the Court finds that it has not been demonstrated by the Government with sufficient certainty that effective and accessible domestic remedies existed for complaints such as the applicant's. Having regard to the circumstances in which her house and property, along with others in her village, were destroyed, the Court considers it understandable if the applicant considered it pointless to attempt to secure satisfaction through national legal channels. The insecurity and vulnerability of the applicant following the destruction of her home is also of some relevance in this context (see the *Selçuk and Asker* judgment, cited above, p. 908, §§ 70-71).

The Court concludes that there existed special circumstances which dispensed the applicant from the obligation to exhaust domestic remedies. (ECHR 30 January 2001, paras. 45-48))

As regards the application of Article 26 to the facts of the present case, the Court notes at the outset that the situation existing in South-East Turkey at the time of the applicants' complaints was - and continues to be - characterised by significant civil strife due to the campaign of terrorist violence waged by the PKK and the counter-insurgency measures taken by the Government in response to it. In such a situation it must be recognised that there may be obstacles to the proper functioning of the system of administration of justice. In particular, the difficulties in securing probative evidence for the purposes of domestic legal proceedings, inherent in such a trouble situation, may make the pursuit of judicial remedies futile and the administrative inquiries on which such remedies depend may be prevented from taking place." (ECHR 16 September 1996, para. 70)

Ilisu dam project: problematic compensation of owners displaced by the conflict (2001)

- The construction of the Ilisu dam will affect villages which have been emptied by the Kurdish conflict
- Finding the displaced owners of property and land in those villages is going to be difficult

"The Ilisu dam project will be built on the Tigris river in Southeast Anatolia for the purposes of energy production with a total capacity of 1 200 MW as an integral part of the Southeastern Anatolia Development Project. A large number of villages will be affected necessitating the compulsory resettlement of more than an estimated 16 000 people and affecting a further 20 000." (ECGD 22 December 2000, Introduction)

"Only an estimated 60% of rural people have land registration deeds (*topu*) in the Ilisu area according to the DSI [State Hydraulic Works] resettlement team. This will make it particularly difficult to administer expropriation. The DSI has written to all cadastral offices, asking that registrations deeds are provided to all land and property owners. But this has not been achieved because access to many villages is inhibited by the tense relationship between the army and the PKK. (The Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) is involved in armed confrontation with the Turkish government. Members believe in an independent Kurdish state with its own language and cultural institutions and have been fighting with the army since 1984.

There are many no-go areas as well as several empty villages which people have left or abandoned. For statistical purposes and in order to preserve such villages people are still registered as inhabitants. This is useful for local and national party elections. But there are also sensitive political reasons for not registering the villages as empty. Local people want to make sure that villages do not disappear from the census and maps and it is not to the government's advantage to publicise that the villages are empty. The DSI is aware that finding the owners of property and land in empty villages is going to present particular problems for the resettlement programme." (ECGD 22 December 2000, sect. 6.1)

Systematic destruction of properties and possessions (1994-1999)

- In most cases, evacuations of villages were followed by destruction of houses, crops and livestock by the security forces
- Settlements of Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin were primarily targeted, ranking from individual dwellings to small villages
- Human Rights Court in Strasbourg released several judgements against Turkey regarding village destruction

"According to the Turkish Parliament's Commission on Migration, 401,328 villagers have been displaced since 1984. Many other observers claim a much higher figure. The population of Diyarbakir, the regional capital, increased by 600,000 during the 1990s. In most cases, these villagers were not evacuated in an orderly fashion, resettled, or compensated. Rather, they were driven from their homes by security forces who left burned houses and destroyed crops and livestock in their wake. A large number of petitions have been filed with the European Court of Human Rights in respect of village destruction, and three important judgment have already been reached against Turkey. [49]

The findings of the European Commission on Human Rights in the Mentes case eloquently describe the officially sanctioned lawlessness that broke out all over southeast Turkey in the 1990s: 'The Commission considered that the burning of the first three applicants' homes constituted an act of violence and deliberate destruction in utter disregard of the safety and welfare of the applicants and their children who were left without shelter and assistance and in circumstances which caused them anguish and suffering. It noted in particular the traumatic circumstances in which the applicants were

prevented from saving their personal belongings and the dire personal situation in which they subsequently found themselves, being deprived of their own homes in their village and the livelihood which they had been able to derive from their gardens and fields.' [50]"

[Endnote 49: European Court of Human Rights, *Mentes and others*, November 28, 1997[7]; *Akdivar and others*, December 18, 1996; *Selçuk and Asker*, April 24, 1998.]

[Endnote 50: European Court of Human Rights, *Mentes and others*, November 28, 1996, paragraph 76.] (HRW September 2000, "Contributing to Stability in the Southeast")

"During the military actions (1984-1999), the Turkish army is said to have evacuated and destroyed thousands [26] of settlements of Turkish citizens of Kurdish origin, ranging from individual dwellings to small villages, to prevent the PKK militants from finding refuge [27]. Rather than restoring these settlements, most of which were situated in remote and isolated areas, the Turkish authorities prefer to rebuild new villages in safer and more accessible places. In the area of Sirnak, six villages have thus been resettled whilst resettlement of five others was planned for the year 2000. The 2000-2001 Plan foresees also the construction of 4 boarding schools and 19 primary schools."

[Endnote 26: On 28 July 1997, the Chairman of the TGNA Committee on Migration confirmed that 364 742 inhabitants of 3185 villages and hamlets had been forced out since 1990 in the framework of the fights against terrorism (Doc 8131, §17)]

[Endnote 27: In a number of judgements, the European Court has ruled that some practices of the security forces in south-east Turkey, including the burning of houses, constituted violations of the European Convention on Human Rights.] (COE 13 June 2001, para. 144)

PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

Return and resettlement programmes

The "central villages" or "village-town" relocation scheme (1994-2001)

- The plan is to settle people from mountain villages into large centralized villages on state lands under the surveillance of security forces
- Several problems affected the implementation of the project: lack of international support, lack of consultation with the beneficiaries, and deficient planning
- Only 4,000 displaced persons were living in such central villages end of 2000
- There are reports that villagers are admitted in central villages only if they join the village guards

The Central village project was announced by Prime Minister Tansu iller in November 1994

"The Village Centers (*merkez köy*) Project was intended to settle people from mountain villages into large centralized villages on state lands near major population centers. The state planned to provide housing and arable land based on loans to be paid back within a 15-to-20 year period. Although the general outlines of the plan were not geared specifically to the displaced (or even to southeastern Turkey), in announcing the plan, Prime Minister Tansu iller said that its first beneficiaries would be 12,000 homeless families from Ovacik. The Netherlands Kurdistan Society traced the history of the idea of a centralized villages in Turkey:

Similar projects have been proposed in the 1970s in more peaceful circumstances, both by the left-of-centre Republican People's Party (CHP) of Mr. Ecevit and the right-wing Nationalist Movement Party of Mr. Türkes. Then named "village-town" (köykent) and "agricultural town" (tarm kent), the foreseen large settlements were to provide the rural population with better infrastructure and employment opportunities than would be possible in the myriad of existing villages and hamlets. Never implemented, the idea was revived in 1992 or 1993 by the late President Turgut zal, who posthumously published position paper on the Kurdish question recommended the massive resettlement of Kurdish mountain villages in more easily controllable large settlements.

The government requested \$278 million from the European Resettlement Fund of the Council of Europe to implement the Village Centers Project. It reportedly failed to secure the funding, and, therefore, did not move forward with the project." (USCR 1999, pp. 20-21)

"[T]he Government lacked a clear will to return all displaced villagers to their original homes and was still pressing forward with its projects for 'central villages' (köykent), into which some villagers would be permanently resettled on government land in communities

under the eye of the security forces. In any event, returns to villages were slow: the U.S. Department's annual human rights report for 1999 quoted a government figure amounting to no more than 6.59% of the Parliamentary Commission's conservative figure." (IHF 2001, p. 303)

"The victims of forced displacement did not show much interest in officials projects such as the project of central villages or village-town, that were developed by the government in order to present conditions for return. These projects were developed without the wish and intent of the victims and rather than securing an atmosphere of social peace and trust only represented the official ideology. Considering the rural way of productivity they also do not carry much weight for the future. All kinds of criticism and alternative models for solution that either the victims themselves or NGOs developed, were not taken into consideration.

[...]

In a speech of 12 December [2000], Diyarbakir Governor Cemil Serhadli accepted the fact that the village-town project had not raised much interest. He pointed out that in Diyarbakir alone, the building of 5,864 houses was still continuing and added that out of 23,000 people who had asked to return to villages in Diyarbakir province only 3,000 had done so. The governor did not deal with the criticism on conditions and permission for a return and claimed that the migrants wanted to stay in town. 'Some are sending their children to school and other have set up their own work. The youth has become used to life in town.' However, the longer necessary steps are not being taken to allow for the return of the migrants and as long as they are forced to move to other settlements the problems of them will only increase. (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey January 2001, sect. 2)

"The government's organized return program appeared toward establishing heavily guarded and controlled 'central villages' in the southeast. About 4,000 displaced persons were living in such central villages at year's end." (USCR 2001, p. 263)

"The only civilian project (even though partly) of the government on the issue of forced displacement presently is the project for building 'City Villages' (Köy Kent) or concentration and urbanisation of groups of villages in pre-determined locations. The implementation of the project has started without any public or political debate. The Chairman of the Chamber of Agricultural Engineers under the TMMOB, Prof. Dr. Gürol Ergin, commented in a speech he made in February that the project had no chance of success even within its own logic. He emphasised that rural development was one of the prerequisites of return to villages, and that people should be able to return on voluntary grounds. In this sense, he said, the State of Emergency regime should be abolished and the land should be cleared of mines. Prof. Ergin also projected that the villagers should be given monetary aid of 18 billion TL for reconstruction. He commented that huge amounts of public funds were spent for the project without any discussion in detail or in general, implementing technically insufficient and badly prepared projects on the basis of commands. He also commented that even the defenders of the 'Köy Kent' were not taking it seriously. He said, the fact that the entire project was prepared within 9 weeks

including the field research justified concerns about the quality of the project." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey February 2001, sect. 2)

"It appears that resettlement into central villages may be conditional on security checks. In May 1999 Human Rights Watch was informed that villagers had been told that they would not be admitted to the 'central village' of Konalga village, near Van, unless they agreed to join the village guard corps." (HRW September 2000, endnote 52)

Opinion of the Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Displacement in Southeastern Turkey, Mr. Hasim Hasimi, Member of the Turkish Grand National Assembly

"TDN: What do you think about Prime Minister Ecevit's Village-Town project?"

HASIMI: There are two striking examples that put on record that the Village-Town does not work. One of these involve the Dogankent experience in Hakkari in 1994. The Dogankent settlement was built for the inhabitants of the Uzungecit area. However, people did not settle in Dogankent. They migrated to Van. This is because there were no resources in Dogankent which would enable them to earn a living. The second example involves what happened in Sirnak's Basagac Village six months ago. That village [built to serve as a central town to provide basic urban services to the villages in the vicinity] lacked drinking water. The settlements get constructed in such an unplanned, unprogrammed manner.

Furthermore, the Village-Town project is not in line with the realities of the East and the Southeast. At that time due to security problems villagers were unable to go to their fields or vegetable plots. The project envisages to merge several villages into one. And people would go to their hamlets, fields or vegetable plots in the morning and return in the evening. But there wouldn't be enough time for them to do that. Also, there is another hazard. When you bring together the population of several villages how will you enable them to earn a living? Due to local factors people have blood feuds and some other disputes and, as a result, avoid being together. They go away and set up a hamlet of their own. When even the inhabitants of the same village who know one another and are even related to one another cannot live together, how can people who do not know one another get along?

There is no sense in continuing to stubbornly implement a project that has met with failure right from the start. I say that the money to be spent on that project will be wasted." (Turkish Daily News, 30 January 2001)

The "Return to villages" policy (1995-2001)

- The project was launched in 1995 by the Government, in an attempt to relieve the pressure on housing and infrastructure in urban areas
- The project met with the opposition of armed forces and governors to return
- Nearly two-thirds of the return applications were ruled "inappropriate" because of security concerns, as of mid-2000

- The villagers have to pay for construction expenses and only households with low incomes receive financial aid
- Sustainability of return is endangered by lack of access to land (occupation, landmines) and security risks (Village guards)
- There are reports of villagers being forced to sign statements that they would return on their own capacity or that their village “was burnt down by the PKK”

"In the summer of 1995, another project, more ambitious in scope than the 'Central Village' scheme called the 'Return to the Village Project' of the Southeast Restoration Project, was announced. The Council of Ministers gave the task of working out a plan for a 'secure return to villages' program to four ministers: Deputy Prime Minister Hikmet Çetin; Interior Minister Nahit Menteşe (presently the deputy prime minister); State Minister Necmettin Cevheri; and State Minister for Human Rights Algan Hacaloğlu. The first stage of the planned return would encourage cattle raising, bee-keeping, and weaving, supported by funding of one trillion Turkish lira (roughly U.S. \$22 million). Hacaloğlu stated, 'We should stop making fake, artificial attempts just to convince the European Parliament....We cannot provide regional security by establishing exaggerated security concepts. We have seen so far that this does not work. If we cannot actualize the return to villages project we cannot stop the detrimental urbanization in big cities.' Deputy Prime Minister Çetin, one of the four members of the 'Return to the Village Project' committee, announced that the 'Southeast Restoration Project' ('Güneydoğu Anadolu Projesi') would be given its final form at a July 14 meeting of twenty-one provincial governors and would be enacted later in Van. Çetin also stated that in meetings with other ministers questions related to making evacuated villages habitable again had been dealt with, adding: 'On Saturday we called twenty-one provincial governors to Ankara. At that meeting we will give the program its final shape and at a gathering in Van enact it. Before winter sets in we will do as much as is possible.' That same month, State Minister Onur Kumbaracıbaşı announced that the 'Southeast Restoration Project' was one of the most important undertakings in supporting the fight against terrorism, noting that an increased migration from rural to urban areas was continuing, causing increased housing, infrastructure and employment needs in cities." (HRW June 1996, Turkish government response to the plight of the displaced)

"Although the government did secure funding for the Return to Villages Project as part of the Southeast Restoration Project and announced ambitious plans to implement it, the military and other security-minded forces obstructed its implementation. 'Competing interests among security forces, the emergency rule governor, and various state ministries harmed the project,' said Human Rights Watch. In July 1995, Emergency Rule Governor Erkan voiced security concerns and suggested that the displaced should stay where they had migrated, while then-Prime Minister İler stated, 'We have made progress in identifying the villages that can be returned to.'" (USCR 1999, p. 21)

"Although violence ebbed in 2000, returns of displaced people during the year appeared to be modest and sporadic, although returns did appear to increase toward year's end. By mid-year, more than 50,000 families, representing an estimated 400,000 people, had applied for permission to return to their places of origin, but nearly two-thirds were ruled

'inappropriate' applications, apparently because of continuing security concerns. By year's end, fewer than 50,000 were believed to have returned to their places of origin." (USCR 2001, p. 263)

"Governor of the Emergency State Region Gökhan Aydıner made a statement on 27 April asserting that during the last ten months 16 thousand people (of 2 thousand 480 households) have been assisted in their return to villages in the framework of the "Back to Village Project" and that among these people those who lack the economic means for returning received financial aid from the Governor Office. Aydıner said that people should not expect the state to give houses to those who return their villages.

Aydıner furthermore alleged that, a total of 5 thousand 800 houses had been constructed between 1993 and 1994 which had been given to those who migrated from their villages to the urban areas; and that the construction of 1 thousand 304 houses had been started in 2000 with the funds allocated by the Ministry of Interior; and that the construction of 657 of them had been completed.

The Chair of the Immigrants Association for Social Cooperation and Culture (Göç-Der) Pefika Gürbüz evaluated the statements of Aydıner, and asserted that what he said was daydreaming. Gürbüz said: 'Nobody wishes to return their villages, unless the Emergency State Law, and the Temporary Village Guard System are abolished, and the region is demined. It is impossible to provide long-term solutions for the problem of forced displacement, unless lise [sic] security is guaranteed and means of survival is created.' While noting that nobody were satisfied with the situation including the village guards who were replaced in the villages that had been constructed according to the 'Back to Village Project', Gürbüz siad: 'It is compulsory to remain in those villages for 20 years once you accept to settle there. The villagers have to pay for construction expenses. If they refuse to pay this amount, they are referred to the court of bailiff. Such a case happened in the Konalga village of Van-Çatak, the residents of where are village guards. The village-guards want to return their native villages, too. 50 villagers in Van applies us after they had been referred to the court of bailiff, but they had to withdrew their applications as a result of the pressures inflicted upon them.' Gürbüz, furthermore recorded that the arable fields belonging to the displaced villagers are cultivated by the village-guards, and that the villagers had launched cases against such occasions. Gürbüz said: 'In Bitlis, the villagers launched several cases against those village-guards. In Tatvan, they are allowed to go their villages in the daylight, but are forced to leave there when the night arrives. If 'returning to villages' is really desired, then, Emergency State Law, and Temporary Village Guard System should be abolished, and all the material and spiritual losses of the displaced villagers should be compensated.' According to the information provided by the Göç-Der, a total of 38 villages have been re-opened for settlement up to now. Of these villages, 23 are in Bingöl, 6 are in Hakkari, 5 Tunceli, 2 in Batman, 1 in Mardin, and 1 in Siirt." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey April 2001, sect. 2.1)

"The program of 'return to the villages' that came up because of the heavy problems of millions of people deprived of their homes and has been discussed since 1997 officially

continued in the year 2000. Victims of enforced displacement who applied for the possibility of return were faced with a variety of legal and administrative problems. An important part of the applications was turned down 'for reasons of security' and those who were accepted sometimes faced heavy conditions.

[...]

Ibrahim Akin, governor of Kulp (Diyarbakir) called on the inhabitants of Naderan (Alaca) village to return. This village with 450 houses had been evacuated in 1993. The governor asked the villagers to file their petitions with the headman of Naderan, Vehbi Baser. Villagers who followed that call later reported that they were forced to sign statements that they would return on their own capacity. Earlier allegations said that the villagers were put under pressure to sign statements that the village 'was burnt down by the PKK'.

Turkey was frequently convicted by the European Court on Human Rights for the practice of evacuating villages and punished with great sums of compensation to pay to the victims. There is strong evidence that Turkey, therefore, attempts to get rid of the responsibility and the necessity to pay compensation (also see the Annual Report of the HRFT for 1998)." (Human Rights Foundation of Turkey January 2001, sect. 2)

Resettlement schemes for dam construction: NGOs report severe in adequacies (2000)

- Problems reported include the failure of authorities to provide compensation, low housing standards and no prospects for employment in new resettlement sites
- Several cases contesting compensation have been taken to the European Court of Human Rights

"The mission, which included NGO representatives from the UK, Italy, Germany and the US, travelled first to the Sanliurfa region of southern Turkey where mission members met with Kurds who had been displaced by the construction of the Atatuk Dam and Birecik Dam (both GAP projects). In the case of the Ataturk Dam, more than 80 percent of those displaced by the dam's construction have received no compensation whatsoever and no replacement houses and those few who have obtained compensation have often lost that money because of rapid inflation. Though the Turkish authorities claim that they have learned lessons from the Ataturk debacle, the fact-finding mission found that villagers resettled earlier this year as a result of the Birecik Dam experienced the same problems as those resettled at Ataturk. As the Birecik Dam's construction progressed, some displaced villagers explained that they had been forcibly evicted from their villages while others said that many families had received no government compensation whatsoever because they did not have land rights, and have still not been given houses despite promises that they would be re-housed. Those villagers who have been moved to new resettlement sites testified that their new houses are over-crowded, unfinished and subject to constant leaking. Factory jobs and commerce centres promised to those resettled have never come to fruition, leaving the displaced - former farming families who made their livelihood off the land - with no prospects of employment, little or no money and the increasing

likelihood that they will have to move to a large city where a fate similar to refugees in Istanbul's shanty towns surely awaits. One oustee told the Mission, 'In the new villages, it is like death.' Several cases contesting compensation have already been taken to European Court of Human Rights with one successful judgement in favour of the applicants awarded in November 2000." (KHRP Summer/Autumn 2000, p. 6)

For more information on the resettlement schemes in the context of dam projects in southeastern Turkey, see 'Stakeholders' Attitudes to Involuntary Resettlement in the context of the Ilisu Dam Project, Turkey', 22 December 2000 [Internet]

See also Turkey case study undertaken by the International Dam Commission (Aslantas Dam / Ceyhan River Basin), November 2000 [Internet]

See also European Court of Human Rights, Case of Yasar and Others v. Turkey, 14 November 2000 [Internet]

Return movements

Return movements remain at a low level, despite recent increase (2000)

- Rate of returns and return requests has reportedly increased since mid 2000
- Most return applications have been rejected by authorities for security reasons
- USCR estimates that less than 50,000 persons returned during 2000

"After the middle of the year, there appeared to be an upsurge in the rate of returns and return requests. About 10,000 persons returned to their villages between June and August, according to the state of emergency governor. In July he declared that 65,000 of the 131,000 return requests filed with his office were 'appropriate'. According to the Jandarma, over 28,000 persons returned to the OHAL [State of emergency] region and adjacent provinces during the year. They state that there are an additional 238,900 applications for returns to 621 villages and 461 smaller hamlets, but only about a third of these claims are appropriate (mainly for security reasons) at this time. a July HADEP 'migrant commission' report claimed HADEP had over 23,000 additional requests for returns, each petition representing a family. However, some persons included on return petitions may not have been aware that a request had been made for them. Furthermore, many evacuees have neither the will nor the economic means to return." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

"Although violence ebbed in 2000, returns of displaced people during the year appeared to be modest and sporadic, although returns did appear to increase toward year's end. By mid-year, more than 50,000 families, representing an estimated 400,000 people, had applied for permission to return to their places of origin, but nearly two-thirds were ruled "inappropriate" applications, apparently because of continuing security concerns. By

year's end, fewer than 50,000 were believed to have returned to their places of origin." (USCR 2001, p. 263)

Authorities hamper spontaneous return movements (2000-2001)

- Reports of returnees who were forced to leave their villages again by security forces

"Local Jandarma impose limitations on some resettlement efforts. According to new reports, in January Jandarma prevented the return of 15 families to a village in Sirnak province. The families claimed that the village guards who currently occupy their village had burned their homes and cut down their orchards." (U.S. DOS February 2001, sect. 1g)

"Although fewer reports documented new displacement in 2000 than in past years, there were reports of would-be returnees being blocked from returning to their villages or prevented from farming or rebuilding in the vicinity of their villages. In the Lice District of Diyarbakir, 12 families reportedly returned to their hamlet, Akcapinar, from which they had been forcibly displaced in 1993. Five months later, on October 5, soldiers from the Lice Gendarme Command reportedly burned their homes, temporary shelters, and crops, and forced them out again. The villagers claimed that they had obtained permission to return from the local authorities. On the villagers reportedly said, 'The prime minister said that they would give assistance in the form of iron and cement for those who return. That's why I returned to the village. I got help from neighboring villages and my relatives and build a house for myself... I built my home because I trusted the prime minister, but they burned it.'" (USCR 2001, p. 263)

See on the incident in Akcapinar, read also "This is too much: Yet another village burned", Kurdish Observer, 16 October 2000 [[Internet](#)]

"Some information on villages that forcibly were evacuated or people moving to other places during December 2000 and January 2001 is as follows:

In Çatak district of Van province a central village by the name of Konalga was built in 1999 and finished towards the end of the year. It stayed empty for several months until village guards moved in. According to information received from Göç-Der the inhabitants tried to sell the houses to villagers who wanted to return for extreme high prices less than one year after they moved in. Similar things can be said for Basagaç village in Sirnak district that was build with the project "return to the villages". Sirnak Governor Hüseyin Baskaya said that the village was built for 106 families, but three months after completion only 13 families had moved in. Reason for the governor to say that the people were quite satisfied with their new houses.

[...]

Among the villagers from Naderen who wanted to return, some were not allowed to come back. One of them, Mehmet Ilbey said: 'When our village had been burnt down it was declared 'forbidden area'. Still, we were pleased, when the governor called us back. But

when we were forced to sign a paper that we would with our own means we refrained from doing so.'

Inhabitants from Oymakiliç village in Siirt province who wanted to return inspected the conditions for return together with Siirt Governor Nuri Okutan on 14 December. They met the village headman Mahfuz Yilmaz who asked the victims of forced displacement to build their houses on his soil. The villagers did not agree and returned to Siirt. Later the village chief came with some relatives who attacked the people willing to return with stones and sticks. M. Ali Koçak had to be taken to hospital and the villagers Adil Bestas, Hursit Bestas, Kazim Bestas, Ömer Kizgin, Nezir Bestas and Salih Bestas were detained.

On 15 January about 10 families who had returned to Gündüzlü (Zirnaçet) and Kalkancık (Mezraxalke) villages in Kozluk district (Batman) were driven out of the villages by soldiers from the gendarmerie in Kozluk. The villager took the settlement Nawala Emero where nobody lived as refuge, but there was an attempt to drive them out of that place as well.

Tevfik Baz and Cemal Tas went to the gendarme to ask for a permission to stay, but were threatened with death "if they came there again". Tevfik Baz reported that they had appealed to the governors of Kozluk and Batman, but had not received any reply. He added: 'We cannot make a living in the places we are in. But in our village we have fields, trees and gardens and could live there without any problem.' Baz said that the region reportedly was declared 'forbidden zone' and the other villagers added that they only wanted to return and did not ask anybody for help." (Human Rights Foundation in Turkey, January 2001, sect. 2)

"The displaced villagers, who wanted to return their native village Taslik of Mardin-Savur in April, were once expelled out of the village at the first day of their return. Taslik village had been evacuated on 17 April 1992. When they went to the Taslik village in April, the villagers were threatened by officers in the Savur Gendarme Regiment Headquarter and reportedly asked to 'go where they had come from', if they did not want 'bad things to happen.'" (Human Rights Foundation in Turkey April 2001, sect. 2.1)

Turkish NGOs assess return conditions (May 2001)

- NGOs draw attention to the threats and obstacles by persons returning to their villages
- They report that the displaced are pressured to state that they have been displaced by terrorists and to renounce compensation
- Recommendations include systematic compensation for property loss, improved rehabilitation support and the abolition of the Village Guards system
- NGOs also complain about abusive police surveillance during their assessment mission

"A joint press statement issued by the Human Rights Association (IHD), the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (TIHV), the Displaced Persons Cultural and Social Aid Association (Goc-Der) and several other NGOs and political parties including the Peoples

Democracy Party (HADEP) following a meeting in Van with people who had been forcibly displaced and a tour of three forcibly evacuated villages from the Gevas, Bitlis and Tatvan districts notes the following conclusions:

The forcible evacuation of villages in Turkey's Southeast began in the early 1990s and continued up until 1999. This resulted in close to 3 million people from around 3,700 settlements being forced to abandon without their will or consent their homes. The report notes that after the 16 year conflict [with the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK)] separatist terrorist organization] many settlements had been razed to the ground, it had been forbidden to go onto the plains and thousands of hectares of forestry had been burned down. All infrastructure - roads, electricity, water - in these regions had been destroyed. The ban on using the plains meant the death of animal raising. The evacuated houses were both taken over and razed to the ground by the village guards.

The report draws attention to the threats and obstacles faced by people wishing to return to their villages such as minefields and the attitudes of the security forces in general. It notes that the forms those wishing to return have to fill in contain an article stating they were forced out by terrorists and they are pressurized into ticking this box. They are also asked to pledge not to demand any compensation from the state. This, states the report, is a violation of their constitutional rights.

Among the recommendations listed by the report are that all returns to villages should be entirely voluntary as should the villagers choice of location. It calls for compensation to be made in lieu of loss to property and material wealth caused by being forced to migrate and for the taking of measures to ensure that the rights to food, shelter, work, health and education are ensured. Material and technical support for those returning to the villages should be provided. It states the aid programs set up by provincial and district governors' offices are hopelessly inadequate and should be improved to really meet all needs. It calls for all the necessary equipments and incentives to be provided so that bee-keeping, animal raising and tobacco farming can be reestablished. It calls for an end to the village guards system. It says the state should work with NGOs to form an atmosphere of trust and provide employment opportunities. It notes that the security forces regard not only those wishing to return but also institutions working for a solution with suspicion.

Finally, the statement notes that the delegation was placed under continuous police and Gendarmerie surveillance, that they were subject to excessive searches, that their tour notes were seized and that they were mistreated. The villages they visited had been subject to raids by the security forces both before and after the visits. Requests by HADEP, TMMOB and Goc-Der to speak with the Van Governor's Office were all turned down. They said they would keep the matter in the public eye until it had been totally resolved." (Turkish Daily News, 2 June 2001)

See the full text of the joint press release [[Internet](#)]

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

General

Human rights activists face severe constraints (2000)

- Turkish human rights NGOs continue to face ill-treatment and prosecution, especially in the state of emergency area
- Restrictive legislation applies to NGO activities
- Lawyers involved in political cases in the southeast have been harassed
- Allegations in indictments against lawyers can include legal behavior such as filing a petition with the ECHR
- Representatives of diplomatic missions or inter-governmental organisations who wish to monitor human rights can operate freely but often under visible police surveillance

"In a policy paper prepared as part of the E.U. accession process, the Turkish government's Special Committee on Turkey-E.U. Relations made the welcome suggestion that 'the constructive function of nongovernmental organizations in raising human rights awareness should be encouraged and there should be closer cooperation and communication with them.' This intention was not well reflected in practice, as members of Turkish human rights organizations were obstructed in their work in various ways ranging from ill-treatment to prosecution. Public demonstrations and press conferences on human rights issues were repeatedly prohibited by local officials or broken up by police, sometimes violently." (HRW 2000, p. 328)

"Nongovernmental organizations operate in many regions but face government obstruction and restrictive laws regarding their operations, especially in the four provinces that comprise the state of emergency region. The Associations Law governing the activities of most NGO's (some fall under the Law of Foundations, and others incorporate themselves as businesses) has restrictive provisions regarding membership, fundraising, and scope of activities.

The nongovernmental HRA has branches nationwide and claims a membership of about 20,000 persons. In 1990 the HRA established the HRF, which operates torture rehabilitation centers in Ankara, Izmir, Istanbul, Diyarbakir, and Adana and serves as a clearinghouse for human rights information. Other domestic NGO's include the Istanbul-based Helsinki Citizens Assembly, the Ankara-based Turkish Democracy Foundation, the Turkish Medical Doctor's Association, human rights centers at a number of universities, and Mazlum-DER, which is the Organization of Human Rights and Solidarity for Oppressed Peoples. Human rights organizations are represented on the Provincial Human Rights Councils currently being formed.

Human rights monitors, as well as lawyers and doctors involved in documenting human rights violations, continued to face detention, prosecution, intimidation, harassment, and formal closure orders for their legitimate activities. The HRA's Diyarbakir branch was reopened in April after having been closed for 3 years. However, several weeks later the state of emergency region governor's office ordered the branch closed for 3 months. Police allowed the reopening in August but within minutes revealed orders to close it for 3 months. The Diyarbakir governor allowed it to reopen 2 months later in October. The HRA branch in Van was also closed for 3 months in May but reopened in August without incident. In February the authorities closed the Malatya HRA branch indefinitely for possessing illegal publications (such as banned issues of otherwise legal newspapers). However, in April a court ruled that there were no criminal grounds for closure, and it reopened in June. At the end of the year, mostly for reasons linked to ongoing protests over F-type prisons, authorities closed HRA branches in Malatya, Gaziantep, Van, and Konya.

Mazlum-DER's Sanliurfa branch reopened in April. The office had been closed since December 1998 after members had made allegedly 'separatist' statements in the press regarding the ban on headscarves in public buildings. The Malatya branch remained closed.

[...]

The harassment of lawyers involved in political cases in the southeast continued. An increased number of attorneys are willing to defend politically sensitive cases and provide greater mutual support within the profession. However, attorneys still face criminal charges and other harassment, particularly if they defend clients accused of terrorism or illegal political activity, pursue torture cases, or seek prompt access to their clients (which police often view as interference).

During the year, attorneys in several cases were charged with various offenses (such as acting on behalf of illegal organizations), and were detained, searched, or threatened. The lawyer for the teenagers tortured in Manisa was put on trial for allegedly showing pictures of the accused policemen to the media, although her lawyer claimed that the television cameras had viewed an open case file. In November attorney Zeki Ruzgar, who was convicted in December 1999 of 'membership in an illegal organization' and sentenced to 15 years in jail, was acquitted of all charges by the Court of Cassation.

The trial of 25 Diyarbakir lawyers entered its sixth year at the Diyarbakir SSC, with prosecutors in October calling for significant sentences against some of the defendants, who were charged in 1993 to 1994 with 'aiding and abetting the PKK' and 'membership in an illegal terror organization.' Allegations in the indictment include legal behavior such as filing a petition with the ECHR. Some 16 of the lawyers alleged that they were tortured while in incommunicado detention after their arrests. The lawyers were free pending trial at year's end. Human rights monitors believe that their prosecution is intended to punish them for representing clients unpopular with the Government and publicizing human rights violations in the southeast.

[...]

Representatives of diplomatic missions who wish to monitor human rights are free to speak with private citizens, groups, and government officials. Security police routinely place such official visitors in the southeast under visible surveillance for reasons that may include an effort to intimidate those they meet, as well as legitimate protection concerns. Visiting foreign government officials and legislators were able to meet with human rights monitors. Representatives of international governmental organizations were able to visit Leyla Zana and Akin Birdal in prison, in accordance with Turkey's international obligations. There were no public reports of officials representing foreign governments being denied permission for such visits." (U.S.DOS February 2001, sect.4)

See "[ICRC: no access to the conflict area in Turkey \(1995-2001\)](#)" [*Internal link*]

Low presence of international NGOs in southeastern Turkey (1999)

- Turkish Foreign Ministry reportedly refused permission to operate in the region to several international NGOs

"The lack of an ongoing international NGO presence in Turkey's southeast primarily results from Turkish government obstruction. While the USCR researcher was visiting the southeast, a local NGO representative described Oxfam-U.K. efforts to establish a project for displaced persons in the southeast several years ago. He said that the government would not give Oxfam-U.K. permission to come and stay. USCR checked with Oxfam International and Oxfam-U.K., but could not confirm the story. Currently, Oxfam has no programs in Turkey. Members of the Diyarbakir Physician's Association told USCR that they initiated a sister city arrangement with the medical association in Berlin that might have provided medical aid, but the doctors said that the Turkish Foreign Ministry blocked it. The Physician's Association also attempted to collaborate with Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF)-Belgium in 1996 on a project to provide primary medical care in slum areas, but that the Foreign Ministry blocked the project before it could start. MSF-Belgium confirmed that the Dutch and Belgian sections of MSF had planned such collaboration with the Diyarbakir Physician's Association to provide medical aid to vulnerable groups, especially children under the age of five and pregnant women. MSF-Belgium wrote to USCR, saying, 'MSF could however not obtain the authorization to continue this project (refusal by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs), so this project came to an end in '96. Several attempts (most recent: mid '98) to obtain authorization for this project, or other projects in Turkey, failed.'" (USCR 1999, p. 34)

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

National response

Government's development project for South-eastern Anatolia (GAP): unfulfilled promises

- A comprehensive development project for South-eastern Anatolia has been launched by the government as an effort to gap regional disparities
- It consists mainly in the construction of hydroelectric plans, and irrigation schemes to develop commercial farming
- According to local observers, the GAP causes more people to emigrate rather than preventing emigration, in particular as a result of dam constructions
- GAP projects do not remedy the concentration of land ownership

"Turkey has launched a comprehensive development project, the South-eastern Anatolia Project (GAP), in order to contribute to the welfare of the whole country. The process of economic development and social progress in Turkey resulted in regional disparities in terms of urbanisation and growth. This made it necessary for the system of incentives to focus on specific regions. In order to give effectiveness to the overall system of incentives, a distinction is observed as 'Normal areas' and 'Areas with priority in development'. As far as the GAP Region is concerned, all provinces in the region with the exception of Gaziantep and Kilis are in the status of 'development priority'. Turkey invites foreign investors to the region and has already signed bilateral agreements encouraging joint ventures with other countries. In spite of all the encouraging precautions taken by the government, terrorism still prevents the targeted levels of national and foreign investments from being reached. It is clear that improvement of the welfare of the whole country and the region depends on the success achieved in the fight against terrorism." (COE 13 June 2001, para. 166)

"The GAP region comprises nine provinces - Gaziantep, Diyarbakir, Sanliurfa, Mardin, Adiyaman, Batman, Kilis, Sirnak and Siirt and the project covers an area of 74,000 km². It includes irrigation and domestic water supply projects and hydroelectric energy plans. Seven projects lie in the Euphrates river basin and six lie in the Tigris river basin. It is expected that on completion the GAP will enable 1.7 million hectares to be irrigated, approximately 50% of the total irrigated area in Turkey. Economic development in the region is expected as a result of improved irrigation so that the region can contribute to rather than be a burden on the national economy. The objective is to encourage commercial farming in order to develop cash crops production and agro-industries, such as food processing in the region for export." (ECGD 22 December 2000, sect. 2.0)

"Turkish officials, and people sympathetic to the government, praise initiatives to develop the south-east and to encourage return migration. The focal point of this activity is the Southeastern Anatolian Project, known as the GAP (Güneydogu Anadolu Projesi).

But the GAP is not seen universally as beneficial. USCR also met with a local professor who had served as a GAP advisor, but who has become a vocal critic of the project. He told USCR, 'GAP has been sold as for the good of the society [of the southeast], but it actually is the opposite, and some of its effects are causing more people to emigrate rather than preventing emigration.'

The professor contradicts the government's claims on four points. First, he says, the dams and reservoirs that control the headwaters of the Euphrates are not being used as extensively for irrigation as the government claims, and the land that is being irrigated is concentrated in a few hands in a region where land ownership remains feudally based. He said that only 7 percent of the 1.7 million hectares of land that the government claimed would be irrigated actually have been irrigated. Second, he says that the electricity produced by the GAP project is not being used to build industry in the southeast, but is being used outside the region. Third, he says that, despite the rhetoric, there have not been health and education reforms accompanying the GAP project.

Finally, the professor claims that the reservoirs themselves have displaced upwards 100,00 people by putting about 150 hamlets and villages under water. He said that the government promised displaced villagers that it would rebuild modern villages on their behalf. Instead, he said, they were given cash compensation. Most, he said, moved to western Turkey, spent the money after a year or two, and have now joined the ranks of the migrant urban poor.

Whatever the benefits of the Gap project might be, Kurds tend to look upon such government initiatives with suspicion. There is a skepticism both about unfulfilled promises as well as ulterior motives. Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller characterize most purported state investments in the southeast as 'ghost investments', saying 'The state would initiate plans to build a factory, but, more often than not, the investment would fail to materialize.'" (USCR 1999, pp. 25-26)

For more information, consult the official website of the Southeastern Anatolia Project [[Internet](#)]

For a review of the developmental effects of the GAP in southeastern Turkey, see "The Story of Eastern and Southeastern Turkey", by Mustafa Sonmez, published in Turkish Probe (Turkish Daily News publication), Issue 43, 15 July 2001 [[Internet](#)]

Growing number of NGOs address problems associated with internal displacement (1999)

- They do not necessarily focus specifically on IDPs but target vulnerable groups in general

"One of the few positive outcomes of the crisis is that it has helped the mobilization of civil society in Turkey. A growing number of non-governmental organizations are addressing many aspects of the problems associated with internal displacement. Projects range from financing and organizing humanitarian assistance, to the economic and social empowerment of vulnerable groups such as women and children. Some of these projects have involved cooperation with international NGOs as well as intergovernmental organizations. A number of NGOs have also become actively involved in publicizing the problem and mobilizing business interests." (Kirisci June 1998, p. 199)

"Local development-oriented NGOs, working cooperatively with the government, have fared better than the more adversarial human rights-oriented NGOs. Calling themselves 'foundations,' and not focused specifically on the displaced, but on the humanitarian needs of various impoverished groups, these NGOs have had some success in attracting funding from European NGOs.

USCR met with the head of a well-established NGO with solid international funding and good relations with the Turkish authorities. The NGO started in 1976 as part of an earthquake relief effort in Van Province. After being closed down in the 1980 coup, it was one of the first NGOs to become reestablished after the military takeover. The NGO chief said, 'We looked very suspicious' because his board of directors included Kurds. Gradually, however, he said, after four or five years, 'the government decided that we were trying to serve our country and that we could be trusted.'

The NGO chief said that he often feels torn by the expectations of his foreign donors and their pressure for his organization to be more outspoken on human rights issues. 'We are sometimes criticized by foreign donors', he says. I am not happy with their attitude. We are not against our country. We want to work for our country, for our people, to criticize, yes, but not to destroy.'" (USCR 1999, p. 25)

Public debate on the Kurdish issue remain limited (1999)

- Turkish media and politicians who contradict the official line on the role of ethnicity, religion, or the military in politics risk prosecution and imprisonment
- Journalists, lawyers and politicians have however attempted to draw more attention to the Kurdish issue and to promote alternative solutions
- Kurdish society has been very active, through human rights organizations, cultural associations, political parties, self-help organizations, local administrations

"Although Turkish media and politicians furiously debate many issues and openly criticize the government, those who contradict the official line on the role of ethnicity, religion, or the military in politics risk prosecution and imprisonment. In July a one-year sentence imposed on former prime minister Necmettin Erbakan for a speech he made in March 1994 was confirmed by the Supreme Court. Erbakan was charged under article 312 of the Turkish Criminal Code with 'incitement to hatred on grounds of race or

religion' although his speech contained no advocacy of hatred or violence. Criticism of the government's exclusion from higher education of women who wear the Islamic headscarf resulted in a one-year prison sentence for Hasan Celal Güzel, former Education Minister and leader of the Rebirth Party.

Such convictions under article 312 of the Turkish Criminal Code also triggered bans on participation in politics or civil society. Government efforts to reform or abolish article 312 were blocked by the military: Minister of Justice Hikmet Sami Türk explicitly acknowledged the chief of general staff's opposition to amendment of article 312.

Article 312, however, was only one of many laws that inhibited freedom of expression. Prison sentences were also handed down under article 155 for 'alienating the people from the institution of military service,' article 159 for 'insulting state institutions,' and article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law for 'separatist' statements." (HRW 2000, pp. 326-327)

"Turkish civil society is a factor that is difficult to assess, but also of undeniably critical importance for resolving the Kurdish issue. Although hard for foreigners fully to appreciate because they work at the margins of accepted discourse, some Turkish journalist, academics, intellectuals, trade unionists, and other test the accepted parameters of political discourse, and ask searching questions of the government's policies. When Prime Minister ZAL appeared on the verge of a breakthrough in redefining the state's relation to the Kurds, van Bruinessen cogently observed that the impetus for change came not only from the international community, but also from significant elements within Turkish society itself. He said:

One factor contributing to this change of attitude was undoubtedly the pressure exerted by western Europe, and Turkey's desire to be accepted as a full member of the European Community. More credit is due, however, to the efforts of those Kurdish and Turkish journalists, lawyers and politicians who, at considerable risk to themselves, kept drawing attention to the Kurdish question and criticizing the official ideology. [101]

Kemal Kiriçi and Gareth M. Winrow take van Bruinessen's observation a step further, arguing that pressure from the international community is counterproductive and likely to provoke a xenophobic backlash among Turkish nationalists, and that reform, however slowly, will and must come from within Turkish civil society.[102] Kiriflçi and Winrow observe a growing debate on the Kurdish question in the Turkish media, proposals coming from within the business community, and increased attention among local NGOs, but note that "in spite of developments...which have created an environment somewhat more conducive to open discussion, not all opinions and ideas with regard to the Kurdish question can be openly and freely discussed." [103]

Others, while observing that Turkish civil society is among the most open in the region, note extensive self censorship on the Kurdish question. Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller write:

The combination of laws that tend to punish speech and the strong sense of patriotic duty imbedded in the Turkish public inhibits a great deal of criticism.... By and large, intellectuals as a class, especially academic circles, play almost no useful political function, because of their failure to examine and question Kurdish policies. University students do not usually argue over Kurdish issues in class, and faculty do not discuss it among themselves. The issue is functionally nonexistent in academic circles. [104]

Barkey and Fuller take an equally sobering look at the Turkish media, saying:

The Turkish press is one of the most open in the Middle East.... Yet this relatively free press has not been so open when it comes to the Kurdish issue.... It appeared as if most of the press took its guidance on national security issues from official bulletins of the government, the military, and the National Security Council. Most of the coverage of fighting was contained in relatively brief stories about the number of PKK terrorists captured or killed the day before.... Since there was no formal debate in Parliament or elsewhere about the Kurds, there was no serious debate in the press either, even though this is not, strictly speaking, a government-controlled press. [105]

Barkey and Fuller note exceptions to their own observations. For example, they mention a series that ran in the daily paper, *Milliyet*, in the summer of 1995 on the problems of internally displaced people. They note that some NGOs, such as the Helsinki Citizen's Assembly, have openly discussed the Kurdish question, and that other intellectuals have spoken out. However, while acknowledging the existence of vibrant press, a democratically elected Parliament, and a growing civil society, Barkey and Fuller remark that Turkish civil society nevertheless is 'too timid to take on the state on an issue as controversial as the Kurdish question.' [106] At the same time, they note the growing activism of Kurdish civil society, and see a growing gap between Turkish and Kurdish civil society:

Kurdish political activism is reflected in the workings of human rights organizations, cultural associations, political parties, self-help organizations, local administrations, and movements of different political stripes, ranging from the traditional Left to Islamic movements. Increasingly, Turks and Kurds are coming to live in their own separate psychological worlds—working jointly in society but increasingly nourishing suspicions about each other's intentions and identifying with different things. It is this growing psychological gap between Kurds and Turks that is the most dangerous feature of the Kurdish issue in Turkey today. [107]

Although he is a foreigner, and therefore not truly representative of Turkish civil society, the experience of Andrew Finkel, a journalist who has spent the last decade in Istanbul and written a biweekly newspaper column for the past two years, nevertheless reveals the challenges facing civil society in Turkey. Following Turkey's capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in February, Finkel wrote a column suggesting that 'it was time to draw the line in the sand between legitimate protest, democratic dissent, and those who advocated or used violence. In short, it was time to win the peace.' [108]

Within hours of the column being published, Finkel was fired. His wife, a historian who has studied Ottoman archives for twenty years, was publicly accused of stealing documents from libraries. They considered leaving the country, but stayed after other people rallied to their defense. Nevertheless, said Finkel, 'The affair did little to strengthen my faith that Turkey was now prepared to deal rationally with its most serious challenge. 'We don't have a Kurdish problem, we have a problem of terrorism,' is still a familiar cry—and not unlike the sound an ostrich makes as it plunks its head in the sand.' [109]

[Endnote 101: Martin Van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh and State: the Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan*. Zed Books, Ltd., London and New Jersey, 1992, p. 45]

[Endnote 102: Kemal Kiriçi and Gareth M. Winrow, *The Kurdish Question and Turkey: An Example of Trans-state Ethnic Conflict*, London, 1997, p. 184. [Hereafter: Kiriçi and Winrow]]

[Endnote 103: Kiriçi and Winrow, p. 151.]

[Endnote 104: Henri J. Barkey and Graham E. Fuller, *Turkey's Kurdish Question* (Carnegie Corporation of New York 1998), p. 118. [Hereafter: Barkey and Fuller]

[Endnote 105: Barkey and Fuller, p. 122.]

[Endnote 106: Barkey and Fuller, p. 116.]

[Endnote 107: Barkey and Fuller, p. 17.]

[Endnote 108: Andrew Finkel, "Thoughts of Change for the Kurds, and Me," *The Washington Post*, February 21, 1999, p. B3.]

[Endnote 109: Finkel, p. B3.]

(USCR 1999, pp. 26-27)

Turkish Parliament reviews the issue of internal displacement and other related human rights concerns in southeastern Turkey (1997-2001)

- The Parliament created specific commissions in 1994 and 1997 which presented reports on the scope of the displacement process in the conflict area
- The issue of torture is closely monitored by the Parliament's Human Rights Commission

"In January 1994, a Turkish parliamentary commission under the chairmanship of the then-ruling DYP party formed in mid-1993 to investigate the conflict in southeastern Turkey released its findings. One conclusion of the Committee's report was that, 'In many operations carried out by security forces - even if this was not intended - the personal security of citizens was damaged and preventative measures were insufficient.'" (HRW June 1996, "The situation of the displaced in the words of the Turkish officials and government ministers")

"A step forward the clarification of this important question has been undertaken by the Turkish Parliament. At the request of one of its members, Mr Algan Hacaloglu of the Republican People's Party (CHP), a former state minister for human rights, the Turkish Parliament set up a Committee on Migration in 1997 to investigate the causes of displacement and to provide aid to the displaced." (COE 3 June 1998, para. 16)

"During the 20th term of the Turkish Grand National Assembly (TBMM) the 'Commission for Research into the Problems of the Citizens Who Have Migrated Due to the Evacuation of Settlements in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia Regions' was formed in line with a motion to this effect presented by 10 deputies including Algan Hacaloglu, Istanbul deputy from the Republican People's Party (CHP).

"The TBMM's (Parliament's) General Assembly formally created that commission during its 101th session on June 9, 1997. It worked for nearly one year and presented its report to the Parliament Speaker's Office in mid 1998.

The commission, which was formed at a time the Welfare Party (RP)-True Path Party (DYP) coalition was in power, had for a chairman Diyarbakir Deputy Hasim Hasimi who was a RP member at that time and later a Virtue Party (FP) deputy. At a more recent date he resigned from the FP and joined the Motherland Party (ANAP).

The commission report made waves because it contained radical suggestions such as 'recognition of the right to education and broadcast in Kurdish,' an issue still alive on the country's agenda since the European Union Accession Partnership Document too refers to it.

The report said that during a 14-year process in the course of which the security forces fought with the militants of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) some 4,000 villages and hamlets had been evacuated in the East and the Southeast and that 1 million people had migrated from the region." (Turkish Daily News 30 January 2001)

See interview of Mr. Hasimi, Chairman of the Committee on Migration in Turkish Daily News 30 January 2001 [Internet]

"In May 2000 the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Parliament issued six long and detailed reports documenting the persistence of torture. A seventh was published in October [2000]. Based on hundreds of interviews conducted during unannounced visits to police stations in the provinces of Istanbul, Batman, Erzincan, Erzurum, Sanliurfa and Tunceli, the commission's work was a model of parliamentary supervision." (HRW 2000, p. 327)

"Since May 2000, the TGNA Human Rights Committee has published nine reports on torture in Turkey, based on inspections of police stations and prisons in 1998-2000 and supported by detailed interviews with prisoners, their families and officials. Although they note improvements over the period, notably in the attitude of police and prison personnel, these reports strongly criticise the lack of supervision and inspection of the system by governors and chief prosecutors. It is hoped that the debate that has been launched in a bold manner by the TGNA Committee, together with the promises made by the government in September 2000, will be followed by concrete action, notable concerning the establishment of effective inspection mechanisms." (European Commission 8 November 2000, p. 15)

State authorities opposes research project by local authorities (2001)

- Diyarbakir municipality was refused the permission to organise a survey on the impact of migration on municipal services

"The organs of the government, instead of meeting their own obligations toward the internally displaced people, are still barring any attempts for solution, even the research on the issue. For instance, the Ministry of Interior banned the Metropolitan Municipality of Diyarbakir from implementing a survey on this issue in February. The Municipality wanted to organise a survey on 'the Impacts of Migration on Municipal Services'. In a letter by the State Statistics Institute, informing the Municipality on the decision to ban, it was said 'although there are no inconvenience in your survey form in technical terms, the Ministry of Interior finds the survey inconvenient in terms of its subsistence [sic]. Therefore, you are not allowed to implement the survey in the field'. The survey form included 27 questions, and one was on the 'reasons of leaving the village'; options included the answers 'due to pressure to become village guards', 'due to religious pressures', 'due to the State of Emergency practices', 'due to PKK pressures', and due to the pressures by security forces." (Human Rights Foundation in Turkey February 2001, sect. 2)

International response

Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe monitors Turkey's human rights commitments (1996-2001)

- The overall human rights situation in Turkey is still under the monitoring procedure opened by the Council of Europe in 1996
- The Monitoring Committee is also instructed to study the issue of the Kurdish minority
- In 1998, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted a resolution on the humanitarian situation of Kurdish displaced in South-East Turkey and North Iraq
- The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture conduct site visits to places of detention
- The Council of Europe Council of Ministers adopted a resolution in 1999, condemning human rights violations committed by security forces against Kurdish civilians

In 1996, the Parliamentary Assembly adopted Recommendation 1298 [[Internet](#)] on Turkey's respect of commitments to constitutional and legislative reforms, in which it instructed its committees concerned to open the monitoring procedure in respect of Turkey under Order N° 508 (1995) [[Internet](#)]. In 1998, the Assembly also adopted its Order N° 545 [[Internet](#)] on the humanitarian situation of the Kurdish refugees and displaced persons in south-east Turkey and northern Iraq, in which it instructed its Monitoring Committee to study the issue of the Kurdish minority in the framework of the monitoring procedure concerning Turkey.

See following documents:

- Resolution 1256 (2001), Honouring of obligations and commitments by Turkey [[Internet](#)]
- Report of the Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe (Monitoring Committee): Honouring of obligations and commitments by Turkey, Doc. 9120, 13 June 2001 [[Internet](#)]
- Information report of the Committee on Committee on the Honouring of Obligations and Commitments by Member States of the Council of Europe: Honouring of obligations and commitments by Turkey, Doc. 8300, 15 January 1999 [[Internet](#)]
- Recommendation 1377 (1998), Humanitarian situation of the Kurdish refugees and displaced persons in south-eastern Turkey and northern Iraq [[Internet](#)]
- Report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography: Humanitarian situation of the Kurdish refugees and displaced persons in South-east Turkey and North Iraq, Doc. 8131, 3 June 1998 [[Internet](#)]

The rapporteur of the Committee of Migration, Refugees and Demography, Mr. John Connor (Ireland, EPP/CD), is planning to visit Turkey in October 2001

"The European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (ECPT), an intergovernmental body under the Council of Europe mandated by the European Convention on Human Rights to conduct site visits to places of detention, reported finding torture equipment during surprise inspections of the Istanbul, Ankara, and Diyarbakir police headquarters. According to Amnesty, 'The Turkish Government not only ignored the findings and recommendations of the ECPT and the UN Committee against Torture..., the government made an extraordinary public statement attempting to discredit the methods and impartiality of the Committee'" (USCR 1999, p. 31)

For more information on the work of the European Committee on the Prevention of Torture, consult the section on Turkey of the website of the Committee [[Internet](#)]

"On 9 June 1999, the Council of Europe 41-member ministerial committee made an unprecedented criticism of a member state when it criticised Turkey for 'repeated and serious' human rights violations which security forces have committed against Kurds. In the interim resolution (Interim Resolution DH (99) 434) the ministerial committee refers to the European Court of Human Rights condemning Turkey in the previous two years in more than a dozen cases related to the security forces. The committee stated that 'no significant improvement' was evident in the past two years. It called upon the Turkish authorities to take the necessary measures to halt torture, destruction of property, illegal killings and disappearances." (Atreya, N.; McDowall, D.; Ozbolat, P. February 2001, p. 46)

See the full text of the Ministerial resolution Int ResDH (99) 434 [[Internet](#)]

European Court of Human Rights condemns Turkish State with regard to its policy of village destruction in Southeastern Turkey (1996-2001)

- Village destruction violates the right to respect for private life, family life, and home and to peaceful enjoyment of possession, according to the Court
- In most cases, eviction and resulting deprivation amount to inhuman and degrading treatment on the civilian victims
- Turkey has also been condemned for intimidating victims who attempted to seek justice through legal action
- Lengthy delays in the payment of compensation for expropriation in the context of dam constructions violates European Convention for Human Rights

"Although Turkey has not ratified the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, it is a member of the Council of Europe, and ratified the 'European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms' in 1954. The Statute of the Council of Europe requires that every member state be committed to the principles of individual freedom, political liberty, and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights functions under the aegis of the Council of Europe, and hears individual petitions under Article 25 of the European Convention. Its task is to examine those complaints and settle and adjudicate them. As of February 1997, the European Commission of Human Rights had received about 800 individual complaints charging Turkey with violating the European Convention, most of which address abuses relating to Kurds in or from southeastern Turkey. The rare inter-state complaint procedure under Article 24 of the Convention was also used twice against Turkey in the early 1980s." (USCR 1999, p. 30)

2,667 applications against Turkey are pending before the European Court of Human Rights, as of July 2001 (European Court of Human Rights, 13 August 2001).

Selection of judgments regarding cases of destruction of property, forced evictions and right to effective remedy:

Akdivar and others v. Turkey, 16 September 1996 [[Internet](#)]

See press release by the Kurdish Human Rights Project, 16 September 1996 [[Internet](#)]

Mentes and others, 28 November 1997 [[Internet](#)]

See press release by the Kurdish Human Rights Project, 28 November 1997 [[Internet](#)]

Selçuk and Asker, 24 April 1998 [[Internet](#)]

See press release by the Kurdish Human Rights Project, 24 April 1998 [[Internet](#)]

Ihsan Bilgin v. Turkey, 16 November 2000 [[Internet](#)]

See press release by the Kurdish Human Rights Project, 16 November 2000 [[Internet](#)]

Zubeyde Dulas (Z.D.) v. Turkey, 30 January 2001 [[Internet](#)]

See press release by the Kurdish Human Rights Project, 31 January 2001 [[Internet](#)]

Examples of judgments relating to compensation for expropriation in the context of dam constructions:

Aka v. Turkey, 23 September 1998 [[Internet](#)]

Yasars and others v. Turkey, 14 November 2000 [[Internet](#)]

See AFP release "*Les Kurdes veulent faire payer à l'Etat turc ses violences*", 26 July 2001 (reproduced in *InfoTurk July 2001, N°275*) (example of compensation paid to villagers following a friendly settlement with the Turkish State in the course of the procedure before the European Court of Human Rights) [[Internet](#)]

EU monitors Turkey's ability to assume obligations of membership (2000)

- EU recognized Turkey as a candidate for membership in the union in December 1999
- "Copenhagen criteria" for membership include the stability of institutions guaranteeing human rights and respect for and protection of minorities
- In 2000, Turkish State released proposals for reforms for a better protection of fundamental rights but failed to indicate precise timeline for implementation
- European Parliament proposed the linking of aid package to progress on Kurdish cultural rights and the economy in the southeast (September 2000)
- EU Partnership Draft Agreement with Turkey did not address the issue of internal displacement (November 2000)

"At its Helsinki Summit in December 1999, the EU recognized Turkey as a candidate for membership in the union. It decided that prior to actual negotiations for membership Turkey must meet the political criteria for EU membership established in Copenhagen in 1993. The necessary steps include 'stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities.'

Turkey's first real indication of its readiness for the Accession Partnership appeared in the 28 February 2000 *Report on the Political Criteria of the Special Committee on Turkey - E.U. Relations* prepared by the Special Committee on Turkey–EU relations attached to the Turkish Prime Minister's Office. Another indication was the document entitled *Calendar for Democracy, the Rule of Law and Human Rights*, produced by the Secretariat of the High Coordinating Council for Human Rights of the Office of the Prime Minister in mid-2000, after the above-mentioned report was published. Both documents contained a large number of proposals for constitutional, legal and administrative reform in the direction of better protection of fundamental rights, including, for example, measures for reshaping the National Security Council (a powerful semi-military body established under the Constitution to advise the state leadership on national security matters); abolishing the death penalty; redrafting laws in order to ensure freedom of expression; establishing judicial police; abolishing incommunicado police detention and combating domestic violence. The documents also proposed the signing and ratification of the ICCPR and the ICESCR, both of which were signed by Turkey on 15 August 2000. However, the omissions and the lack of precision regarding the final

shape of such reforms, as well as the time line for reforms indicated in the Calendar (by the end of 2001 or 2002), left room for concern because numerous changes were already long overdue, for example those regarding freedom of expression and torture, incommunicado detention, language rights, and asylum issues." (IHF 2000, pp. 296-297)

"The particular emphasis that the European Union places on minority rights in Turkey was a cause of friction. In September [2000], the Turkish Foreign Ministry expressed irritation that the European Parliament on releasing an aid package of 135 million euros (U.S.\$117 million) to Turkey had proposed linking the funds to progress on Kurdish cultural rights and the economy in the southeast." (HRW 2000, p. 329)

"On 8 November [2000], just under a year since Turkey acquired its EU candidacy status, the European Commission publicly announced its EU Accession Partnership Draft Agreement with Turkey. Although there is much to commend within the document, there are a number of glaring omissions to the agreement which include the absence of the words 'Kurd' and 'Kurdish' throughout. Equally worrying is the fact that the crucial issue of internally displaced peoples in Turkey is not specifically addressed in the criteria to be met by Turkey for EU membership. In addition, most of the agreement's criteria are general with no specific deadlines or benchmarks in place to mark Turkey's progress in cleaning up its appalling human rights record." (KHRP Summer/Autumn 2000, p. 1)

*See also the Turkish National Programme for the adoption of the *acquis communautaire* (Introduction and Political Criteria), Appendix IV of the Report of the PACE Monitoring Committee "Honouring of obligations and commitments by Turkey", Doc. 9120, 13 June 2001 [[Internet](#)]*

Consult the website of the European Commission for more EU documents regarding Turkey's accession [[Internet](#)]

For background information on EU accession criteria and the Copenhagen Criteria, see website of the European Union [[Internet](#)]

United States: officials call for progress on human rights (1999-2000)

- NGOs request closer monitoring of end-use of U.S. military equipment sold to Turkey

"The State Department's Country Report on Human Rights Practices for Turkey in 1999 fully reflected the scale of violations and official interference in political and public life. The report detailed many cases of people imprisoned for expressing their nonviolent opinions, and of torture and arbitrary killing, and accurately documented the impunity that protected the perpetrators of violations. Senior government officials publicly called for progress on human rights. In January [2000], in response to a congressional letter, President Clinton expressed support for language rights. In January, in response to a congressional letter, President Clinton expressed support for language rights and an

interest in the Kurdish minority. Consistent with this, there was a strong reaction to the arrest of HADEP mayors in March.

In July [2000], the Turkish government announced that U.S. helicopter manufacturer Bell Textron won the contract for 145 attack helicopters, a sale worth an estimated four billion dollars. This class of equipment has been used to commit human rights violations in Turkey, including 'disappearances' and arbitrary killings, and the sale is subject to congressional approval. A congressional debate was not expected before 2001. Rights groups protested the pending sale and pressed the U.S. government to ensure at least that effective systems but put in place to ensure end-use monitoring of this equipment." (HRW 2000, p. 329)

USCR recommendations to the United States (1999)

1. "Link arms transfers and military training to Turkey's compliance with human rights standards. As Turkey's principal arms supplier, the United States is legally and morally bound to ensure that Turkey does not use those weapons in deliberate government actions that arbitrarily displaced civilians or violate other fundamental human rights.
2. Request UN humanitarian programs, to which the United States is a major donor, to assist displaced persons in Turkey.
3. Press the OSCE to become involved in conflict mediation and minority rights advocacy in Turkey
4. Urge Turkey to extend invitations to the ICRC and relevant UN human rights and humanitarian bodies, and to grant full access to international nongovernmental organizations monitoring human rights or seeking to provide humanitarian assistance,
5. Press the Turkish government and the PKK to seek a political, non-military solution to the Kurdish problem." (USCR 1999, p. 39)

OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities has not included Turkey in his work (1999-2001)

- His mandate excludes work on individual cases and on situations involving acts of terrorism
- The US Committee for Refugees recommends OSCE be more involved in the issue of the Kurdish minority in Turkey (1999)

"A High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM), whose mandate focuses on conflict prevention and mediation involving national minorities, operates under OSCE auspices. Although the HCNM lists ten other European countries in which his office is engaged (as well as a special OSCE-wide study on the situation of the Roma and Sinti), the high commissioner has not included Turkey in his work. The HCNM's mandate restricts his activities in several ways, for example, by excluding work on individual cases, and explicitly barring information-gathering or fact-finding missions 'in situations involving organized acts of terrorism or to communicate with or acknowledge communication from any person or organization that practices or publicly condones terrorism or violence.' The HCNM office observes that 'the protection of persons

belonging to minorities has to be seen essentially in the context of the interests of the State and of the majority.'

In preparing this report, USCR wrote to the office of the HCNM asking why it has not taken up the issue of the Kurdish minority in Turkey. The office responded, saying, 'The Kurdish question falls out-side of the mandate of the HCNM as this does not allow him to be involved in matters where terrorism is involved. The Turkish Government would consider this to be the case in the Kurdish question, which thus limits effectively his field of action in this area.'" (USCR 1999, p. 31)

USCR recommendations to the OSCE

"2. The High Commissioner on National Minorities (HCNM) should reassess the Kurdish situation in Turkey and determine whether engagement on the Kurdish question fits within the HCNM mandate. The HCNM should take into account the PKK's formal renunciation of terrorism and whether the restriction in the HCNM's mandate against considering the cases of minorities in "situations involving organized acts of terrorism" still applies to the situation in Turkey.

3. The OSCE should revisit the HCNM's mandate generically to ensure that the existence of relatively small terrorist groups does not preclude the HCNM from becoming engaged on behalf of an entire minority group, whose members may not identify or support the terrorist group in question.

4. The Council of Ministers should use the OSCE's human dimension mechanism to initiate good offices missions and dialogue with the Turkish government relating to internal displacement in Turkey. If consensus cannot be reached with the Turkish government, the OSCE should use its "consensus-minus-one" authority to authorize investigation of Turkish compliance with OSCE commitments without Turkey's consent.

5. The Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) should work with Turkey for the creation of an ombudsman on human rights for Turkey.

6. The OSCE ought to consider appointing a contact point within the ODIHR to consider Kurdish issues (comparable to the contact point established with regard to Roma and Sinti issues)." (USCR 1999, p. 38)

See also "Turkey's Foreign Minister Blocks OSCE Visit", in Info-Turk, October 2000 [Internet]

Consult OSCE website for more information on the High Commissioner for National Minorities [Internet]

ICRC: no access to the conflict area in Turkey (1995-2001)

- ICRC has not received the consent of Turkish authorities to enter southeastern Turkey or to visit detention centres
- The PKK has declared its intent to respect the Geneva Conventions in 1995

"[D]espite Turkey's signing of the Geneva Conventions, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has been frustrated in its attempts to gain access to civilian populations affected by the conflict in the southeastern part of the country and to visit Kurdish combatants and civilians detained by Turkish security forces. It has yet to receive the consent of the Turkish government to enter southeastern Turkey or to visit detention centers, a *sine qua non* for its involvement. It has reached an impasse with the Turkish government on its interpretation of its obligations under the Geneva Conventions, and on whether the Geneva Conventions apply to the situation in southeastern Turkey.

The ICRC has negotiated with the Ministry of Defense to conduct training seminars on international law for army officers. The ICRC has had somewhat more success in its dealings with the PKK. This came about as a result of a 1994 conference organized by the Kurdistan Human Rights Project in which prominent international lawyers advised the PKK unilaterally to declare itself bound by the Geneva Conventions. Following that advice, in 1995, the PKK contacted the Swiss government and declared its intent to respect the Geneva Conventions and the two protocols additional to the conventions. The PKK has also permitted ICRC to visit Turkish soldiers held by the PKK in northern Iraq and to accompany released soldier/prisoners back to the Turkish border. Despite its formal agreement to abide by the Conventions, the PKK in the field has continued to target unarmed civilians in violation of the Conventions." (USCR 1999, pp. 31-32)

"The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) continued to be denied access to prisoners in accordance with its standard procedures." (HRW 2000, p. 324)

Check ICRC website for more information on ICRC activities in Turkey [[Internet](#)]

United Nations

UNHCR and WFP do not implement any programme relating to internal displacement in Turkey (1999-2001)

"Although UNHCR does work on behalf of refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey, and has field offices in several cities in the southeast, to date it has done nothing with regard to internally displaced persons." (USCR 1999, p. 33)

"The World Food Programme (WFP) has not been involved in either relief or development in Turkey. WFP notes that Turkey is a country with a food surplus; it

purchases food in Turkey for transport to other countries with food needs." (USCR 1999, p. 33)

Turkish Government has been slow to invite rapporteurs of the UN Human Rights Commission to visit the country (1996-2001)

- UN special rapporteurs for torture, disappearances, extrajudicial executions and religious intolerance received invitations to visit the country from 1996
- UN Representative on Internally Displaced Persons finally received invitation from Turkish Government to visit the country in the course of 2001

"In its 1996 report, Turkey: No Security without Human Rights, Amnesty International reported that the Turkish government had not responded to requests for invitations to visit from the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary executions, the special rapporteur on torture, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearance, and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention. Since that report, through persistent pressure from the EU as well as human rights groups, the government has become more open to UN missions. In September 1996, Turkey permitted a visit by the special rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right of freedom of opinion and expression, Abid Hussain. Hussain noted that he 'much appreciated the perfect balance the Turkish Government has struck between assistance and discretion in receiving the mission,' and said that the mission received 'full freedom of movement, including a visit to Diyarbakır,' and 'full freedom of inquiry.'

Turkey's openness was rewarded with a generally positive report. The special rapporteur said that he received a large number of allegations on infringements on the right to freedom of expression, but that 'only a minority of the allegations that were communicated to the Special Rapporteur met basic standards of accuracy and good faith.'

In September 1998, the UN Working Group on Disappearances visited Turkey. In November 1998, the UN's special rapporteur on torture visited the country. In 1999, the Turkish government invited the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions and the rapporteur on religious intolerance to visit.

The UN Commission on Human Rights has not, however, appointed rapporteurs or representatives specifically to investigate human rights abuses in Turkey (although it has created such mandates to investigate and report on human rights violations in neighboring Iran and Iraq, and its special rapporteurs have reported extensively on internal displacement in Sudan, Congo/Zaire, and Burma). (USCR 1999, pp. 32-33)

Report of the Special Rapporteur on the question of torture, 27 January 1999 [[Internet](#)]

Report of the Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances on the visit to Turkey (20-26 September 1998), 28 December 1998 [[Internet](#)]

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Representative of the Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons

"In 1992, the UN secretary-general appointed Deng to be his representative on internally displaced persons. The representative is the only figure in the UN system with an exclusive mandate relating to internally displaced persons. Among his tasks are monitoring situations of displacement by undertaking fact-finding missions and establishing dialogues with governments. As Deng writes in *Masses in Flight*, 'At present, governments that wish to evade the attention associated with a fact-finding mission can do so with impunity, leaving countries with more cooperative governments to become the focus of the representative's attention. The only country Deng specifically cites as having not responded to his request to visit is Turkey. In 1999, he renewed his request.' (USCR 1999, p. 32)

"The Representative has also accepted invitations from the Governments of Philippines and Turkey to undertake missions to those countries and plans to do so in the course of 2001." (UNCHR 17 January 2001, para. 98)

UNDP: attention to vulnerable groups in development programmes (1999-2001)

- UNDP resident representative has not dealt specifically with the issue of internal displacement
- UNDP promotes sustainable and participatory schemes for vulnerable groups in the government development programmes for southeastern Turkey
- Issues of urban settlements in western Turkey have also been addressed

"Unlike UNHCR, the UN Development Programme (UNDP) can be said to have a standing mandate on behalf of internally displaced persons. The UN General Assembly has delegated to UN resident coordinators—who generally are UNDP resident representatives in the country—the task 'of coordinating assistance to the internally displaced, in close cooperation with Governments, local representatives of donor countries, and the United Nations agencies in the field.'

Despite this mandate, UNDP in Turkey has basically turned a blind eye to the humanitarian assistance needs of the internally displaced. In 1995, the UN resident coordinator informed the office of the representative of the secretary-general on internally displaced persons that UN agencies were not then involved in any activities in support of internally displaced persons in Turkey.

In the resident coordinator's view, the Turkish government was addressing the problem in its efforts to protect the human rights of the affected persons, as well as to resettle the uprooted. The UN system was not planning future involvement because the government had not requested international assistance and had stated that the displacement problem did not exist. The resident coordinator further noted that people displaced as a result of

the dam construction of the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP) should not be considered as displaced persons because they had been or were being resettled, and because they would in fact benefit from UNDP-supported activities for sustainable human development in that region.

Although UNDP is not geared specifically to address the humanitarian assistance needs of displaced persons, to its credit, it has shifted its development focus from western to eastern Turkey. In November 1995, the UNDP resident coordinator established an Inter-Agency Social Development Programming Committee (ISDPC) to coordinate the work of ten UN agencies engaged in development activities in Turkey. UNDP has budgeted \$5 million, including government cost sharing and donor funding, to support 28 sub-projects in the GAP region. Activities include income-generation programs for women and girls in rural eastern and southeastern Turkey and a World Health Organization (WHO) project to eradicate malaria in the southeast. At the same time, UNDP has focused some attention on the *gecekondu* of western Turkey. In Ankara, UNDP is working with the Chamber of City Planners and local authorities to work toward upgrading squatter settlements by legalizing existing settlements and developing local communities." (USCR 1999, pp. 33-34)

GAP programme

"The aim of this programme is to spur regional-development planning, management and project implementation to consolidate local capacities and to engage them in development processes. The programme seeks to do this through a matrix of projects concerned with economic and social growth, implemented at the local level in the provinces of the South Eastern Anatolia (SEA) region. The challenges of regional development persist and especially with regard to basing regional-development planning and investment on sound participatory mechanisms. Strengthening the catalytic role of UNDP will result in more sustainable and participatory local-development schemes. With UNDP support, programme partners will target vulnerable groups better in their project designs. This makes it possible to incorporate the goals of the World Summit for Social Development (WSSD) in programme interventions and to build necessary linkages among the many activities and subprojects supported under the programme. This in turn will lead to a more measurable impact." (UNDP 13 December 2000, para. 29)

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ANAP	Motherland Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
DHKP/C	Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front
DKP	Democratic Mass Party
DSI	State Hydraulic Works
ECHR	European Court of Human Rights
ECPT	European Committee for the Prevention of Torture
EU	European Union
FP	Virtue Party
GAP	Southeast Anatolia Project
HADEP	People's Democracy Party
HCNM	High Commissioner on National Minorities
HEP	People's Labour Party
HIC	Habitat International Coalition
HRA	Human Rights Association of Turkey
HRF	Human Rights Foundation
IBDA-C	Islamic Raiders of the Big East-Front
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IHD	Human Rights Association of Turkey
KESK	Confederation of the Public Labour Unions
MHP	National Action Party
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NCO	Non-Commissioner Officer
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NSC	National Security Council
OHAL	State of Emergency
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
TB	Tuberculosis
TBMM/TGNA	Turkish Grand National Assembly
TIKB	Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party
TIKKO	Workers and Peasants' Army of Turkey
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Programme for Development
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNWGEID	United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances
USCR	U.S. Committee for Refugees

WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
WSSD	World Summit for Social Development

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