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**CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF
TORTURE AND DETENTION**

**Written statement* submitted by the Society for Threatened Peoples,
a non-governmental organization in special consultative status**

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[30 January 2004]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Torture and other Ill-treatment in Turkey

Society for Threatened Peoples is worried about continuous reports about torture in Turkish detention centres. While the international human rights organisation Amnesty International noted that in the first half of 2003, in accordance with the introduced four-day limitation, detention periods were being quite clearly kept within the legal limit, access to a lawyer for detainees was still rarely implemented. According to information received by Society for Threatened Peoples the practice of torture and ill-treatment by police officers and military staff, during arrest and police custody, far from decreasing, remains widespread and systematic. Society for Threatened Peoples is particularly concerned by the reported increasing use of more sophisticated methods of torture, detectable only by advanced forensic investigation methods, which are rarely available. Both political and criminal offenders, women, men and juveniles are victims of torture in the country. The situation of ethnic minorities, in particular of Roma people and Kurds, is of special concern. There are numerous accounts of persons being illegally detained and tortured by police and soldiers in South East Turkey. Although the state of emergency was lifted on November 30, 2002, Society for Threatened Peoples remains seriously concerned by reported cases of arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention and cases of torture in police custody. Detention centers remain isolated from the outside world. Human rights lawyers are banned from seeing their clients and face harassment including threats from prison staff, systematic humiliating body searches, confiscation of legal files in violation of the Turkish Code of Criminal Procedure. Torture will continue unless the lawyers' right to have access to their clients is guaranteed for all detainees and consequently implemented in practice. Especially prisoners of the F-type and E-type detention centers (isolation cell system) are in danger of being subjected to torture. Worrying is also that safeguards concerning the registration of detainees by police allegedly were not always complied with.

In the case of alleged torture impunity is another problem. There were allegations that despite numerous complaints, prosecution and punishment of members of security forces for torture and ill-treatment were rare.

Therefore the Society for Threatened Peoples appeals to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to call on the Turkish government:

- to ensure that the full benefits of safeguards against ill-treatment and torture of detainees be available in practice,
- to guarantee that prompt, impartial and full investigation into numerous allegations of torture and ill-treatment were carried out,
- to ensure an efficient and transparent complaints system,
- to repeal the statute of limitations for crimes involving torture.
