

Appendix

11 May 2020

Turkish police kidnaps Hatice Büşra Kuyun, HDP Party Assembly Member



Since the abortive coup in July 2016, we have been experiencing a new type of crime in Turkey: the police kidnapping politicians, activists, or ordinary citizens. In a statement in December 2019, Mustafa Yeneroglu, a former deputy of the ruling AKP and ex-member of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe said: “A republic of fear was created [in Turkey]... There is torture in this country. People are being kidnapped.” The Human Rights Watch had earlier published reports on kidnappings and torture.

Kidnappings in Turkish provinces may gain some visibility, but those in Kurdish provinces have totally gone unnoticed. Many HDP members and administrators have also been kidnapped so far. Typically, people presenting themselves as the police kidnap our members “to have a conversation with” and without a warrant or court decision. Kidnapped people are typically asked to stop their party activities or work for the police as informants. Most recently, on 4 May 2020, HDP Party Assembly member Ms Hatice Büşra Kuyun (picture above) was kidnapped in the city center of Van province.

Please take a couple of minutes to read her testimony below to understand the conditions under which our administrators and members carry out activities of the third biggest party represented at the Turkish parliament:

“My name is Hatice Büşra Kuyun. I am a member of the Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP) Party Assembly and an executive committee member of the HDP Youth Assembly. At the HDP Congress in February 2019, I was assigned by my party to carry out party activities in Van and other Eastern Anatolian provinces. Since I arrived Van in the aftermath of the congress, I have been subjected physical surveillance (“fiziki takip”) by the police many times. Lastly, yesterday [May 4], I was stopped by a policeman in plain clothes while walking down Cumhuriyet Avenue, one of the busiest streets in Van. He showed his police ID card and asked to see mine. I pulled out my ID card and presented to him. Then, all of a sudden another man grabbed me by my arms from behind, and they forced me into a white car that they had parked on the street. I refused and protested. I told them

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that they had to present a custody warrant, that [otherwise] this was unlawful. But, they squeezed me by the arms and forced me into the car. In the car, I asked for the custody warrant. They said that there was none. I asked why then they forced me into the car if there was no warrant. They said, “Whether you are under custody or not depends. We are the ones to decide on it. For now, we want to have a conversation with you,” and started asking questions. They said: “You, Party Assembly members, are appointed with orders [from the PKK]. We very well know for whom and what you are working for.” They claimed that I had been involved in, in fact, leading numerous [political] actions carried out in the city and that I was teaching the youth how to make improvised explosives. I told them that if I had been involved in any such thing as they claimed, they had to launch a legal investigation against me. I told them that I would not talk with them under those circumstances, that did not want to have a conversation with them, and I observed silence. The policeman sitting next to me at the back of the car picked on a tattoo that I have on my neck, making [abusive] comments like ‘the letter “A” [of the tattoo] had to symbolize the initial of my lover’ or ‘I had escaped home because my father had forced me to marry a sixty-five-year-old, and joined the organization [PKK].’ Together they burst into laughter. As all these were happening, the [policeman] sitting next to me did not keep proper physical distance and sidled up in a harassing manner. They drove the car out of the city. Past the farmer’s market in Şabaniye neighborhood, they took the inter-city road to Hakkari. On the road, we passed through four or five [security control] checkpoints. At each checkpoint, these people [who were with me in the car] showed the police police ID cards, and we passed through. However, these people [also] told me that their police ID cards were fake, that they had many such [fake] ID cards, and would have presented gendarmerie IDs had we passed through a gendarmerie checkpoint. They told me that they were not ordinary guys but high-ranking ones and that we could not see them but only they could see us if they wanted to. They said that they had known about my arrival to the city from the very first day and that I was being followed and they knew everything about me and all of my movements. They threatened me, saying: “You shall stay home until the Eid [May 23-25], and, then, leave Van at once. Otherwise, we will have you arrested. Only today, we had five of your friends arrested. There is nothing easier than getting you guys arrested. Now I can open your purse and place a gun into it. We can photograph you here on this road, claim that you attempted assassinating the control police or soldiers, and we can imprison you for years. If you do not leave Van over the Eid, we know what we are going to do to you and to your friends in the parliament. You know us. Today we treated you gently. You know Van; you know us normally. You shall leave this city for good so that we won’t see you again. We will not treat you as gently if we ever meet again. They insulted me saying things like “stupid” and “sluggish.” [Then] while passing through a village of Van, they stopped and opened the car, and I got off. I walked towards the village. The place where I got off was close to a military checkpoint, there were many civilian police vehicles patrolling the area. That is why I walked into the village and made phone calls to my friends. Later, my friends came and picked me up. As I was getting off of the [police] car, I was able to see its plate number. It was a white car with the plate number of 65 AAT 923. Later, I reached out to my lawyer and told him what happened. My lawyer will file a complaint [at the Prosecutor’s office] tomorrow morning.”

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