

Refugee Review Tribunal

AUSTRALIA

RRT RESEARCH RESPONSE

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This response was prepared by the Country Research Section of the Refugee Review Tribunal (RRT) after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the RRT within time constraints. This response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum.

Questions

1. What was the situation for Kurds in the province of Tunceli in 1999?
2. Is there any information on the detention and forced evacuation of Kurds in the province of Tunceli in 1999?
3. Who was the governor of the Province of Tunceli in 1999?
4. Is there a Human Rights Association branch in Tunceli?
5. Can you provide any information about this organization?
6. How many Kurds and Alevis are there in the province of Izmir?
7. Are there Kurdish and Alevi organizations in the province of Izmir?
8. Can you provide information about the organisations that represent the Kurds and Alevis in Izmir?
9. Do the Kurds and Alevis suffer discrimination in the province of Izmir?
10. What were the results of the election in November 2002 in the province of Izmir, for MHP / ULKUCU?
11. Can you provide information on the MHP party, eg leader, Aims of the party. number of members, area of operation?
12. Is the party active in the province of Izmir?
13. Is there any information to suggest that members of the MHP target Kurds in the province of Izmir?
14. What is the relationship between the MHP party and ULKUCU?
15. Can you provide information on the group ULKUCU?
16. What are the group's aims?
17. Where is the group based?
18. Does it operate in the province of Izmir?
19. Is there evidence to suggest that the group is involved in criminal activity?
20. Is there evidence that the group targets Alevis and Kurds?
21. Is there any evidence that the police and the MHP-ULKUCU work together?
22. Is there any evidence to suggest that the police in Turkey deny protection to Kurds who are threatened by criminals?
23. What is the attitude of the present government towards protecting Kurds?

24. Can you provide information on the current situation for Kurds and Alevi in the province of Izmir?

RESPONSE:

General Background:

General background information on the diverse nature of the Alevi religion/faith within Turkey is provided in 2005 research conducted by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *TUR43515.E Turkey: The Alevi faith, principles, beliefs, rituals and practices (1995-2005)*, 7 April <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444449> – Accessed 8 November 2006 – Attachment 1). General information on the Kurds, including Alevi Kurds, is also provided by an Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada research response from 1995 (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 1995, *ZZZ22068.EX – Turkey, Iran and Iraq: General information on the cultural, demographic and religious background of the Kurds*, 19 October <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/ndp/ref/?action=view&doc=zzz22068ex> – Accessed 8 November 2006 – Attachment 2).

Questions

- 1. What was the situation for Kurds in the province of Tunceli in 1999?**
- 2. Is there any information on the detention and forced evacuation of Kurds in the province of Tunceli in 1999?**

The International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights (IHF) 2000 *Annual Report on Human Rights Violations* refers to a mass forced evacuation of some 3236 villages and hamlets in 1999 in the homeland of the Kurds in south eastern Turkey, including the province of Tunceli:

Protection of Ethnic Minorities

Kurds

In south eastern Turkey, the traditional homeland of the Kurds, the state of emergency was renewed for four months in November 1999 in five provinces – Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Sirnak, **Tunceli** and Van. The Kurds had not been targeted by the security forces because of their ethnicity per se, but rather because of their attempts to assert political or cultural rights based on Kurdish identity. Turkish authorities continued to deem such activities treasonous and a threat to the very foundations of the Turkish state.

...In the mid-1980s, the Turkish government started arming Kurdish villagers as “provisional village guards”: they were officially hired to defend villages against PKK [Kurdistan Workers’ Party] attacks, but were in fact used by the security forces as auxiliaries for raids in neighbouring villages. The village guard system was voluntary in theory, but any village that refused to join the paramilitary system was suspected of being sympathetic to the PKK and therefore subjected to frequent security raids, or forcibly evacuated and burned to the ground.

According to a 1999 announcement by the Turkish government, 362 915 people were evacuated from 3 236 villages and hamlets throughout 1999. Over 26 000 persons were reportedly resettled with government assistance ... The exact number of people who were displaced, not in an orderly evacuation procedure but as a punitive measure, remains unknown because no independent group has been freely able to conduct

research in the region; the estimated figures range between 560 000 and 800 000. A parliamentary committee that investigated the situation in the Southeast in 1998 noted that the state failed to compensate the villages who had lost their homes and lands in the region. The European Court of Human Rights often ruled in favour of villages who had been forcibly evacuated, and the government continued to pay assessed damages in those cases. **However, generally, it did not give damages to evacuated villages and did little to help those who had resettled in urban areas.**

The regional governor of the emergency state areas had the right to censor news, ban strikes, impose internal exile, and double the sentences of those convicted for “cooperation with terrorists”. Only limited judicial review of the state of emergency governor’s administrative decisions is permitted (International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights 2000, ‘Annual Report – Turkey’, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights website, pp.369-70 http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=2010 – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 3).

In its Annual Report for the previous year of 1999, the IHF provided further details of the “village guard” system in Tunceli:

The state of emergency, promulgated in 1987, remained in force in five provinces in southeastern Turkey – Diyarbakir, Hakkari, Sirnak, **Tunceli** and Van.

...The Village Guards

An accompanying feature of the emergency rule was the village guard system, set up in 1986 by the Turkish government in order to combat the terrorist activities of the PKK. Its membership was estimated at around 50 000. The village guards were recruited from villages inhabited by certain Kurdish clans, were armed and paid by the government, and operated under the direct command of the military forces. In theory, becoming a village guard was voluntary, but in practice the refusal to join was followed by brutal, often collective, reprisals by the security forces, including extra judicial executions. In addition, more than 3000 settlements were evacuated and the **displaced persons ended up to live in shanty towns around big cities. They were also the target for police harassment. Their return was conditioned on the “voluntary” joining of the “village guard system”. Those who refused to cooperate with the village guards faced, for example, food embargoes, particularly in the Tunceli province.**

The village guards were often accused of having committed serious human rights violation, including murder, kidnapping, rape, assaulting civilians at roadblocks, looting, and trafficking in drugs. In two cases the European Court of Human Rights found Turkish security force guilty of **burning houses** in order to force the evacuation of villages, which refused to join the village guard system (International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights 1999, ‘Annual Report – Turkey’, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights website http://www.ihf-hr.org/documents/doc_summary.php?sec_id=3&d_id=3943 – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 4).

A summary of Turkish news for the 6 May 1999 which is made available on the Hellenic Resources Network website but is sourced from the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, refers to “wide-ranging security operations” against the PKK by the Turkish government in the district of Mazgirt in Tunceli:

Wide-ranging security operations launched in the districts of Nazimiye, Mazgirt and Pulumur (Tunceli) and in the districts of Yayladere and Kigi (Bingol) are still being undertaken. Members of the PKK terrorist organization yesterday attacked a group of Turkish

soldiers patrolling near Gunesli Police Station in Yayladere along the Tunceli-Bingol border and killed nine security forces; four security officials were wounded. Security officials noted that mopping-up operations to root out nearly 40 terrorists were continuing in the region ('PKK kills nine security officials' 1999, *Turkish Press Review*, Hellenic Resources Network website, 6 May, <http://www.hri.org/news/turkey/trkpr/1999/99-05-06.trkpr.html> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 5).

Documentation of torture in police stations in Tunceli also exists. Reports presented in May 2000 by the Human Rights Commission of the Turkish Parliament documented torture after hundreds of interviews in police stations, including in the province of Tunceli:

In recent years, reports by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT) and the U.N. special rapporteur on torture have confirmed the widespread nature of torture in Turkey. 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. Based on hundreds of interviews conducted during unannounced visits to police stations in the provinces of Istanbul, Batman, Erzurum, Sanliurfa and **Tunceli**, the commission's work was a model of parliamentary supervision (Human Rights Watch 2001, *World Report – Turkey*, Human Rights Watch website <http://www.hrw.org/wr2k1/europe/turkey.html> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 6).

It should also be noted that the peak of forced evacuations and village destructions by the military in the Tunceli (Dersim) area took place during 1994 and 1995, for which much more detailed reports are available (Jongerden, J. 2001, 'Resettlement and Reconstruction of Identity: The case of the Kurds in Turkey', *The Global review of Ethnopolitics*, vol. 1, no. September, pp. 80-86, Ethnopolitics Specialist Group website http://www.ethnopolitics.org/ethnopolitics/archive/volume_1/issue_1/jongerden.pdf – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 7; and especially Stichting Nederland-Koerdistan (SNK), 1995 'Forced Evacuations and Destruction Of Villages In Dersim (Tunceli), And Western Bingöl, Turkish Kurdistan September-November 1994' Faculty of Letters of the University of Utrecht website – Accessed 6 November 2006 http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/forced_evacuations_Dersim.htm – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 8).

3. Who was the governor of the Province of Tunceli in 1999?

Two reports in February and October 1999 indicate that the governor of Tunceli was Mr Mehmet Ali Turket ('Turks jubilant over Ocalan's capture' 1999, *CNN.com* website, 16 February <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9902/16/ocalan.turkey.reax/> – Accessed 6 November – Attachment 9; and 'Demirel meets Tunceli's Governor' 1999, *Turkish Press Review*, 27 November, Hellenic Resources Network website <http://www.hri.org/news/turkey/trkpr/1999/99-05-06.trkpr.html> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 10). The news report in Attachment 9, on the arrest of the Kurdish leader Abdullah Ocalan, stated that in Tunceli in February 1999 "security was tight. Checkpoints searched all people entering and leaving the city and police were out in force", and reported the governor as stating that "All security measures have been doubled as a precaution against possible actions by the organization [PKK] and its sympathizers".

4. Is there a Human Rights Association branch in Tunceli?

5. Can you provide any information about this organization?

The Human Rights Association of Turkey (HRA or IHD) was established in Turkey in 1986 and is the country's largest independent human rights organization. Extensive information on its aims, objectives and leaders, as well as the treatment of some of its members by the authorities and the closure of some branches, is treated in 2004 research by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. This report also describes the relationship between the Human Rights Association (HRA), the People's Democratic Party (HADEP), and the Democratic People's Party (DEAHP) (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004, *TUR42999.E – Turkey: The Human Rights Association (IHD), including its aims, objectives and its leaders; whether the IHD is associated with the People's Democracy Party (HADEP) and the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP); the treatment of IHD members and workers; the status of IHD branches, including which, if any, have been closed down; ways by which IHD members are identified (January 2001 – October 2004)*, 13 October, <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444467> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 11).

The Human Rights Association's website address is www.ihd.org.tr. Some information is made available in English, including a list of current branch offices. No branch office is currently listed for Tunceli (Human Rights Association (undated), 'How to Access head quarters and branches of HRA: Human Rights Association of Turkey – Information' Human Rights Association website <http://www.ihd.org.tr/eindex.html> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 12). News reports during the early 1990s refer to the treatment by the authorities of two presidents of the Tunceli branch of the Human Rights Association (HRA) (Human rights Watch 1990, *World Report – Turkey*, Human Rights Watch website http://www.hrw.org/reports/1990/WR90/HELSINKI.BOU-04.htm#P585_134572 – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 13; and 'No security without human rights – ALI EKBER KAYA' (undated), Amnesty International website <http://www.amnesty.org/ailib/intcam/turkey/leaf4.htm> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 14).

6. How many Kurds and Alevis are there in the province of Izmir?

No official statistics on the number of Kurds and Alevis living in the province of Izmir were found. It is doubtful whether such statistics exist at all because the census does not record the Alevis as a distinct category. Recent estimates on the number of Alevis countrywide are one-fifth of the population or between 5 and 12 million; and for Kurds 9.6 to 12 million. Other sources indicate that of an estimated 15 million Alevis in Turkey, 3 million are Kurds (Van Bruinessen, M. (undated), 'Kurds, Turks and the Alevi revival in Turkey' Faculty of Letters of the University of Utrecht website http://www.let.uu.nl/~martin.vanbruinessen/personal/publications/Alevi_revival.htm – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 15; and Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 2005 *TUR43515.E Turkey: The Alevi faith, principles, beliefs, rituals and practices (1995-2005)*, 7 April <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444449> – Accessed 8 November 2006 – Attachment 1; and Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, 1995, *ZZZ22068.EX – Turkey, Iran and Iraq: General information on the cultural, demographic and religious background of the Kurds*, 19 October <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/ndp/ref/?action=view&doc=zzz22068ex> – Accessed 8 November 2006 – Attachment 2).

7. Are there Kurdish and Alevi organizations in the province of Izmir?

8. Can you provide information about the organisations that represent the Kurds and Alevis in Izmir?

Alevi Organisations and Representation in Izmir:

No information was found on Alevi organisations that operate in Izmir. An RRT Country Research Response from November 2005 does provide information on Alevi and Alevi Kurdish organisations which operate at the national level (RRT Country Research 2005, *Research Response TUR17613*, 16 November – Attachment 16). The Alevis in Izmir do have political representatives in the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP). A news article in *The New Anatolian* refers to Alevi deputies from Izmir advocating on behalf of the rights of Alevis country wide in the parliament:

Alevi deputies of the main opposition yesterday dismissed a gesture from Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc to establish a worship center for them in the assembly building, **saying this meant nothing as long as Alevis throughout Turkey are denied basic rights.**

Fifteen Alevi deputies of the Republican People's Party (CHP) argued in a written declaration that the ruling Justice and Development (AK) Party has abused the **Alevi sect by shutting down cemevis, their places of worship, across the country for years.** They denounced Arinc's proposal as purely a political move.

...A few days ago, **Istanbul's AKP-run Sultanbeyli district Municipality halted the construction of a cemevi constructed by the Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Association by seizing the construction vehicles.** The deputies also stressed that AKP leader and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan sent a bulldozer before in order to demolish the Kocaahmet Dergah, a center for Sufi ritual.

The Alevi deputies who signed the declaration are as follows: Ali Riza Gulcicek (Istanbul), Bayram Meral (Ankara), Ferasmus Sahin (Tokat), Muharrem Kilic (Malatya), Sinan Yerlikaya (Tunceli), Mehmet Ali Ozpolat (Istanbul), Hasan Guyuldar (Tunceli), Ismail Degerli (Ankara), Erol Tinastepe (Erzincan), Fuat Cay (Hatay), Turkan Miracogullari - (Izmir), Ismet Canakci (Ankara), Kemal Kilicdaroglu (Istanbul), **Ahmet Ersin (Izmir), and Vezir Akdemir (Izmir)** ('Alevi deputies dismiss cemevi gesture in Parliament' 2006, *The New Anatolian* website <http://www.thenewanatolian.com/tna-6391.html> 9 May – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 17).

Kurdish Organisations and Representation in Izmir:

A 2002 news article does refer to a Kurdish Cultural Centre in Izmir (Payton, G. 2002, 'Conversations with Turkish Resisters', The Non-Violent Activist website, July-August <http://www.warresisters.org/nva0702-3.htm> – Accessed 8 November 2006 – Attachment 18). The People's Democratic Party (HADEP), later called the Democratic People's Party (DEHAP), which advocates for Kurdish rights is recorded as having a directorate office in Izmir in 2004 in relation to it being the target of a fire-bomb. This and further information on HADEP-DEHAP is found in Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004, *TUR42991.E 21 September 2004 Turkey: The situation and treatment of members, supporters and sympathizers of leftist parties, particularly the People's Democratic Party (HADEP) and Democratic People's Party (DEHAP) (January 2003 – September 2004)*, 21 September <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444479> – Accessed 8 November 2006 – Attachment 19).

9. Do the Kurds and Alevis suffer discrimination in the province of Izmir?

Kurds in Izmir:

2003 research by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada looked specifically at the situation of Kurds in western Turkey, including Izmir. On their general living conditions, the Board quoted the Izmir branch of the *Displaced Persons Social Aid and Cultural Association (Goc-Der)*:

The tents [raised by displaced Kurds] have been erected in isolated, unattractive areas far from the city center. ... Inside, people sit on nylon sheets and rugs. At night, bed-rolls are unfurled. ...

No person has the chance to live a healthy life in these tents that leak and are no protection from the elements. ... there are no kitchens, bathrooms, toilets or sinks ... no supplies of running water. Water is carried in from far away places in buckets and barrels or bowsers. These tents are far from the main roads and have no electricity or telephones.

There are no institutions ... supermarkets, markets, hospitals or pharmacies. There are no newspapers or TVs and so ... contact with the outside world is broken. They bake their own bread but are all suffering from malnutrition. They cannot buy foodstuffs with high nutritional values like eggs, milk, meat and seasonal vegetables. The most extravagant luxury they have is beans and rice (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003, *TUR41724.E -Turkey: Follow-up to TUR41129.E of 8 May 2003; situation of Kurds, particularly in western Turkey*, 11 November <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444517> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 20.)

On the specific question of discrimination of Kurds in western cities, the same 2003 research by Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada quotes contrasting opinions:

Kurds living in western cities also claim that they suffer from economic and social discrimination ... According to a fact-finding report on Turkey in October 2000 by Asylum Aid, Kurds are routinely turned down by landlords or employers because employers or landlords “prefer to employ or rent to Turks rather than [to] Kurds” (ibid.). *Turkish Daily News* cited one Kurdish man as stating: ““When the site owners [employers] find out I’m from Mardin, they come up with loads of excuses and don’t give me a job”” (26 Jan. 2001)

.... **Contrasting information** was provided by a Professor of political science at Ankara University, who is also the President, and a founder of the Ankara-based Center for the Research of Societal Problems ... On the situation of Kurds in western Turkey, the Professor and President of TOSAM stated the following:

if individuals and groups did not vocally express their collective identities and did not demand special rights, they were never **discriminated or repressed**.... There is **discrimination** against them because they are Kurds. However, there is a general **discrimination against** anyone who has no profession, wealth and a function to perform in a more modern setting. Turks are not exempt from this predicament.... In short, Kurds knocking on the doors of Europe or North America ... from western Turkey are making their appeals **not on legal (human rights) grounds or because they are discriminated against** openly. Turkey has been suffering under the throngs of an economic crisis [for] twenty years. Wages are low, jobs are scarce and those people [who come from] impoverished eastern provinces with no money, professional expertise, little education feel very ... left [out] of the

mainstream city life. But this is not due to their ethnic background, rather they are not equipped with the skills and knowledge to answer the demands of modern life and a competitive new world. Just like many others from the less developed world they seek their fortune in richer and more developed countries (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003, *TUR41724.E -Turkey: Follow-up to TUR41129.E of 8 May 2003; situation of Kurds, particularly in western Turkey*, 11 November <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444517> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 20).

Alevi in Izmir:

No information was found on whether Alevi's face discrimination in the province of Izmir. The situation of Alevi's across Turkey, including complaints by Alevi's that they are discriminated against on religious, educational, and public employment grounds, is treated in a 2005 Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *TUR43493.E Turkey: The situation of Alevi (January 2002 – April 2005)*, 14 April <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444447> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 21).

Two more recent news articles are indicative of the current Alevi claims of discrimination on religious and educational grounds across Turkey for the period up to October 2006:

- Birch, N. 2006, 'Doubts grow for Alevi in Turkey as party of religious Sunnis holds sway minority sect fights back', *The Washington Times*, 24 May – Attachment 22.
- 'Turkish religious minority "upset" by textbooks' 2006, *BBC Monitoring European*, 17 October – Attachment 23.

10. What were the results of the election in November 2002 in the province of Izmir, for MHP / ULKUCU?

The last elections for the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, which consists of 550 deputies, were held on 3 November 2002. The Islamic Justice and Development Party (AKP) came to power winning 363 of the 550 seats. The Republican People's Party (CHP) won another 178 seats, and 9 seats were won by independents. None of the other 16 parties, including the Nationalist Movement (or Action) Party (MHP), obtained the 10% threshold which is required for representation in the legislature. The MHP gained 8.3% of the vote. No information could be found detailing the national elections results specific for the province of Izmir other than that referred to in answer to questions 7 and 8 above about CHP deputies in Izmir, which would indicate that at least 2 seats in Izmir province were won by the CHP (Jansen, H. 2005 'Turkey Update' European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity website, 15 April <http://www.europeanforum.net/country/turkey> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 24).

In the previous national elections in April 1999, the MHP gained 18% of the vote and 129 assembly seats and was part of the coalition government between 1999-2002. The MHP's leader, Devlet Bahçeli, became Deputy Prime Minister during this time. The turn around in the 2002 elections for the MHP has been attributed in part to allegations of corruption by some MHP Ministers ('Nationalist Action Party' in: Banks, A. et.al. 2006, *Political Handbook of the World 2005-2006*, Washington D.C., CQ Press, p. 1198 – Attachment 25; 'Nationalist Action Party – Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP)', in: Day, A.J. *Political Parties of the World*, 5th ed., John Harper, London, p. 470 – Attachment 26).

In the local elections held on 28 March 2004, the seat of Izmir was won by the Republican People's Party (CHP) (Jansen, H. 2005, 'Turkey Update', European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity website, 15 April <http://www.europeanforum.net/country/turkey> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 24). The MHP won four local elections, in Gumushane, Kastamonu, Nigde, and Iğdir and obtained an average of 10.4% of the vote ('Political Structure of TURKEY' (undated), Turkish Office Of The Prime Minister, Directorate General Of Press And Information website, pp.9-12 <http://www.byegm.gov.tr/REFERENCES/Structure.htm> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 27).

11. Can you provide information on the MHP party, eg leader, aims of the party, number of members, area of operation?

12. Is the party active in the province of Izmir?

13. Is there any information to suggest that members of the MHP target Kurds in the province of Izmir?

The European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity website contains the following summary on the Nationalist Action Party (MHP):

Leader – Devlet Bahçeli

Part of this party is on the far right of the political spectrum and call themselves ultra-nationalist. They are known as the Grey Wolves, the name of the MHP youth movement.

The MHP was founded in 1969 by Alparslan Türkeş. Structured as a typically para-military organization, MHP was largely responsible for the escalation of violence in the late seventies. The party was dissolved after the 1980 military coup while Türkeş and others were accused in the early 80's of the murder of several public figures. In 1995, Türkeş was again allowed to reconstitute the MHP and to take part in the elections, which earned the party 8.5% of the vote. The party leaders funeral in April 1997 drew 300.000 people including politicians of all parties. Türkeş was succeeded by Dr. Devlet Bahçeli, in spite by strong opposition inside the party led by Tugrul Türkeş, son of the party's founder.

MHP became the second Turkish political party after the April 1999 general elections and got 129 seats in the Assembly. It's new leader Bahçeli is drawing a different profile than earlier leaders in the sense that he is willing to cooperate with the EU, and with other political parties. He claims there are only a couple of issues (like the Kurdish status and the death-penalty which he was in favour of) on which the party will not be able to negotiate. During the last elections in 2002, the MHP got 8.34% of the votes (Jansen, H. 2005, 'Turkey Update', European Forum for Democracy and Solidarity website, 15 April <http://www.europeanforum.net/country/turkey> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 24).

Reportage found on the activity of the MHP in Izmir was limited to one article: a May 2006 news article on the MHP's Provincial Congress:

Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) leader Devlet Bahçeli said yesterday that it was time for his party to come to power. Speaking at the MHP's **Izmir** Eight Ordinary Provincial Congress, Bahçeli claimed that the **MHP was not a far-right or marginal party, but at the center, adding that they embraced all social groups**. Criticizing the policies of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP), Bahçeli called for early elections ('Bahçeli: Its time for the MHP to come to power' 2006, Turkish Office of The Prime Minister, Directorate General Of Press And Information website, 1 May

<http://www.byegm.gov.tr/YAYINLARIMIZ/CHR/ING2006/05/06x05x01.HTM> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 28).

No information was found on whether MHP members target Kurds in Izmir.

14. What is the relationship between the MHP party and ULKUCU?

15. Can you provide information on the group ULKUCU?

16. What are the group's aims?

The formal name of ULKUCU in Turkish is *ulkuculer* (The idealists) or *Ulkucu Kareket* (the Idealist movement). They are more commonly referred to as the Grey Wolves. They are the extremist youth organisation or wing of the MHP ('Grey Wolves' (undated), Wikipedia website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_Wolves – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 29 [Users should be aware that Wikipedia is a Web-based free-content encyclopaedia which is written collaboratively by volunteers. Country Research recommends that users of Wikipedia familiarise themselves with the regulatory practices which Wikipedia employs as a preventative measure against vandalism, bias and inaccuracy.]; and 'Nationalist Action Party' in: Banks, A. et. al. 2006, *Political Handbook of the World 2005-2006*, Washington D.C., CQ Press, p. 1198 – Attachment 25).

The Wikipedia entry provides further information on the group and its aims:

Their formal name in Turkish is *ülküçüler* (the Idealists) and *Ülkücü Hareket* (The Idealist Movement), inspired from Italian fascist Giovanni Gentile's "Actual Idealism" theory as a pseudo-philosophical reference. *Ülkü Ocakları* (Forges of Ideal), the proper platform of Grey Wolves, denies any "direct" links with **MHP** and presents itself as an independent youth organisation. Their female supporters are called Asena and Grey Wolves of Kurdish stock are designated sarcastically as Bozkürtler, literally "Grey Kurds," punning on the Turkish name of the movement.[2] When loudly acclaimed while visiting an Istanbul synagogue in 1992, Alparslan Türkeş referred to the gatherers, with some humor, as the "Grey Wolves of Moses"

... History

Foundation and ideology

The Grey Wolves were founded as the youth organization of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP) created by Alparslan Türkeş in 1969.[4] A significant pillar of the MHP's ideology is the dream of creating the Turan, the "Great Turkish Empire", including all Turkish (sometimes referred as Turkic) peoples mainly in the successor Central-Asian countries of the former Soviet Union as well as China (the Uyghurs of East Turkestan). The concept of Turan is similar to racist and expansionist concepts of an Aryan empire proposed by the Nazi regime [1]. Such political ideas however are not new in the Balkans. Similar concepts can be found in Albania and Bulgaria. Alparslan Türkeş, the founder of the Grey Wolves is known to be an admirer of Adolf Hitler ('Grey Wolves' (undated), Wikipedia website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_Wolves – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 29).

Further information on the *ulkucu* (or ultranationalists) and its links to the MHP is provided in a 1999 Human Rights Watch report:

Ultra-nationalists, **or ulkucu**, are usually associated with the National Action Party (Milli Hareket Partisi-MHP), a right-wing, pan-Turkic, radical nationalist party that was represented in the Turkish Parliament until the December 1995 elections, when it received only 8 percent

of the vote, failing to pass the 10 percent barrier necessary for parliamentary representation. Its leader is Alpaslan Turkes, a retired army colonel who played a major role during Turkey's 1960 coup.

From 1975-1977, the predecessor to MHP, also headed by Turkes, was a junior partner in Suleyman Demirel's coalition National Front government where he served as deputy prime minister. At the time there were numerous allegations that Turkes placed his supporters in the security apparatus. The Ulkucu Gençlik Derneği, UGD, ["Idealist Youth Association"], which functioned as a youth branch for MHP, carried out some of the extremist right-wing terror of the 1970s. Feroz Ahmad, a noted scholar of this period, commented in his 1993 work *The Making of Modern Turkey*, that, "Meanwhile, the **Grey Wolves [ulkucu]**, with Turkes as deputy premier, also saw themselves as part of the state and operated with greater confidence in creating a climate of terror designed to intimidate their opponents." The **ulkucu** fought radical leftist groups who also used terror tactics in the political violence that plagued Turkey in the 1970s. Over 5,000 were killed in right/left terror in the years immediately preceding the September 12, 1980, military coup.

After the 1980 coup, Turkes was arrested and his party closed down. MHP was reestablished after a ban on pre-coup parties and politicians was lifted. **The ulkucu groups are active today and often battle leftist or Kurdish groups**, though at a much lower level than the fighting of the 1970s. **Some prominent members of the ulkucu movement later entered mainstream politics in the 1980s and 1990s.** Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, chairman of the far-right "Great Unity Party" (Buyuk Birlik Partisi), which has seven seats in parliament, was active in the UGD in the 1970s (Human Rights Watch 1999, *TURKEY, Violations of Free Expression in Turkey: Violence Against Journalists*, Human Rights Watch website <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/turkey/turkey993-05.htm> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 30).

17. Where is the group based?

No information was found indicating that the ULKUCU group is based in a particular area of Turkey.

18. Does it operate in the province of Izmir?

No information was found indicating that the ULKUCU group operates in Izmir. One reference was found to the operation of "ultranationalists" in Izmir:

In İzmir a group of around 100 ultranationalists attack the homes of families from the town of Bitlis, following the death of the Idealist Club's vice-President Sami Ören in a clash with a group from the town. Two families, numbering about 100 people, leave İzmir ('Lynching psychology thrives on Kurdish question and bad governance' 2006, Turkish Daily News website, 18 September <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr/article.php?enewsid=54355> – Accessed 9 November 2006 – Attachment 31).

19. Is there evidence to suggest that the group is involved in criminal activity?

One source does state that "Numerous sources show that the MHP and the Grey Wolves had ties to the Turkish mafia" ('Grey Wolves' (undated), Wikipedia website http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey_Wolves – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 29). No further details could be found on specific criminal activity by the ULKUCU group in Turkey in the sources consulted.

20. Is there evidence that the group targets Alevis and Kurds?

21. Is there any evidence that the police and the MHP-ULKUCU work together?

A Human Rights Watch report from 1999 refers to the extensive links between the Turkish security forces, the MHP and the ULKUCU group and their collective targeting of Kurdish and Alevi groups:

Security forces—especially those involved in actions against the PKK or armed radical leftist groups—have seemingly cultivated a tight, if largely unofficial, relationship with ultra-nationalist right-wing groups, so-called “ulkucu,” or “idealists.” In addition, many police sympathize with far-right nationalist or Islamist groups. Kemal, a former policeman who was expelled from the force for contact with an outlawed left-wing group, complained that,

“What they tell you at the police school and what you do on the job are two different things. At the school they taught us about human rights, but at demonstrations—I was a riot policeman for three years with the riot police (“Çevik Kuvvetleri”)—they would tell us to beat the people if it was a leftist protest but to show restraint if they were rightists or Islamists. There were two standards: if you capture a religious person, one standard, but if you capture a leftist, you beat him. **About eighty or ninety percent of the police in my unit were MHP or fundamentalist.**”

... A 1995 report prepared by the center-left Republican People’s Party (CHP), at the time the junior partner in the government of Prime Minister Tansu Çiller, criticized the increasing **influence of extreme right-wing and fundamentalist groups among the security forces.** Such groups are usually ideologically hostile to **Kurdish** and left-wing organizations, the groups police deal with most often in security cases. **The report presented the following conclusions: of the seventy-seven provincial security directors, 48 percent were alleged to be either radical fundamentalists (köktendinci) or extreme nationalists (ulkucu); police academies and “special team” training centers only accept those with a “nationalist” reference because only “nationalists fight against terror;” only 18 percent of the provincial security directors could be considered “democrats;” the police had a mentality to consider all those not from their ranks as the enemy.** One scholar commented that, “Young right-wing hoodlums, who once carried out raids against “leftist” tea houses, now became policemen and schoolteachers or were recruited into the special forces fighting the **Kurdish** guerrillas.”⁹⁷

Other sources make the same charges. In August 1994, Sevet Kazan, the former justice minister from the Islamist Welfare (Refah) Party, charged that most members of the **“special teams,” noted for their abusive behavior in southeastern Turkey, were members of the far right Nationalist Action Party (Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi-MHP).** In the fall of 1996, the headquarters of the General Staff prepared a brochure for internal distribution to all security forces in the southeast titled, “Public Relations and Winning the People in Internal Security.” In a warning directed at “special team members,” the brochure called on security force members not to wear or make symbols of a “definite political nature that incites the populace;” implied was the **“grey wolf” and three crescent symbols associated with MHP and ulkucu groups.** During an investigation of the Sivas massacre of 1993, when fundamentalists burned down a hotel killing thirty-seven **Alevi** intellectuals, a Turkish parliamentary investigation committee discovered that Islamist bulletins faxed to local newspapers and believed to have provoked the public to violence were sent from the Sivas Security Directorate (Human Rights Watch, 1999 *TURKEY, Violations of Free Expression in Turkey: Violence Against Journalists*, Human Rights Watch website <http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/turkey/turkey993-05.htm> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 30).

A report from August 2006 also alleges attacks by the MHP on Kurdish workers:

Hundreds of people gathered to lynch the Kurdish workers in Bozkir town of central Turkey in Konya region. The attackers chanting, “God Is Great! We don’t want people from the east in our town!” assaulted the Kurdish workers where 2 workers were injured seriously. The police did not intervene and watched as the events escalated. The Kurds, having no protection for their lives are preparing to leave the Turkish town.

The attack was instigated against the 25 Kurdish building workers by people organized by the **MHP- Nationalist Movement Party**

... Recent Lynching events in Turkey

- In July, in the town of Ödemiş of **İzmir**, the third largest city in Turkey, a lynching attempt occurred against a whole family of seasonal workers, including 6 women.

- On June 3rd, again in **İzmir**, in a town called Torbali, when two young men fought in a wedding party, the fight escalated into a **Turkish/Kurdish** ethnical scuffle. Hundreds of people tried to lynch the Kurds, threatening their lives.

... In July, when the Families of The Arrested and Imprisoned (TAYAD) wanted to hold a press release, again the **MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) and the Grey Wolves** attacked the peaceful families reading a press release.

- On May 5th, again in the western region of **İzmir**, in the small town of Kemalpaşa this time, an argument started between market vendors and the local police turned into a lynching attempt when the **Nationalist Movement Party** started attacking the market sellers for their ethnic origin. Many people were arrested in the long fight (‘Turkey/Konya – Lynching attempt against Kurdish workers in Konya’ 2006, Sendika.Org – Labornet Turkey website, 31 August http://www.sendika.org/english/yazi.php?yazi_no=7376 – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 32).

22. Is there any evidence to suggest that the police in Turkey deny protection to Kurds who are threatened by criminals?

No information was found suggesting that the Turkish police do not protect Kurds who are threatened by criminals. However, information was found on the level of police corruption and criminal involvement. On the level of crime and corruption among state agents, especially among politicians and police, see Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2004, *TUR42993.E Turkey: Incidence of crime and corruption by state agents, including the prevalence of the police practice of demanding harac (bribes) from shop owners; whether small businesses are targeted; whether the government has been involved with illegal/criminal elements (i.e. mafia) in carrying out crimes and/or corruption; the state reaction to crime and corruption, including whether individuals who engage in such behaviour are punished (September 2002 – September 2004)*, 27 September <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444474> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 33).

23. What is the attitude of the present government towards protecting Kurds?

24. Can you provide information on the current situation for Kurds and Alevis in the province of Izmir?

No information could be found on the situation of Kurds and Alevis in Izmir. On the general situation of Kurds and Alevis in Turkey, including their treatment by the present government, see the following three reports:

- RRT Country Research 2005, *Research Response TUR17416*, 15 July – Attachment 34.
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2003 *TUR41724.E -Turkey: Follow-up to TUR41129.E of 8 May 2003; situation of Kurds, particularly in western Turkey*, 11 November <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444517> – Accessed 6 November 2006 – Attachment 20).
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2005, *TUR43493.E Turkey: The situation of Alevis (January 2002 – April 2005)*, 14 April <http://www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/en/research/rir/?action=record.viewrec&gotorec=444447> – Accessed 7 November 2006 – Attachment 21).

List of Sources Consulted

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United Nations (UN)

Non-Government Organisations

International News & Politics

Region Specific Links

Topic Specific Links

Search Engines

Google search engine <http://www.google.com.au/>

Online Subscription Services

Library Networks

University Sites

Databases:

FACTIVA (news database)

BACIS (DIMA Country Information database)

REFINFO (IRBDC (Canada) Country Information database)

ISYS (RRT Country Research database, including Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, US Department of State Reports)

RRT Library Catalogue

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9. ‘Turks jubilant over Ocalan’s capture’ 1999, *CNN.com* website, 16 February <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/europe/9902/16/ocalan.turkey.reax/> – Accessed 6 November.
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