

Testimony of Fatma Somersan

Fatma Somersan, a 22-year-old physics student, was expelled on June 5 because she had actively participated in a demonstration on May 24. On the morning of June 5, she was summoned to the mayor's office where she was told that she had to leave the country that same day. The authorities told her:

"Go to Turkey. Now that you have participated in the demonstration, see what it is really like in Turkey." She was forced to leave the country alone; her 24-year-old brother and parents remain in Bulgaria. Miss Somersan was one of 48 Turks from Orliak to be expelled; she estimated that her village has a population of 850 families. Each Turk who was expelled came from a different family. They were able to take out few personal belongings. Miss Somersan was allowed one bag. She was given one hour to pack and say goodbye to her family. Her cousin packed the bag while she spent the hour with her parents. Neither she nor her parents cried when they parted because she told them that she would continue to work for the rights of ethnic Turks in Turkey, and her parents were proud of her. (Interview in Istanbul, June 8, 1989).

Source: Fatma Somersan, interview by Ted Zang, Istanbul (June 8, 1989), "Destroying Ethnic Identity: The Expulsion of the Bulgarian Turks," *Helsinki Watch Report*, October 1989, *Human Rights Watch*, <http://www.hrw.org/> (accessed June 25, 2008).