

Faky Ali Ahmat,
Quranic teacher

CHAD

Faky Ali Ahmat and a 14-year-old boy were among six people killed by members of Chad's National Gendarmerie, who opened fire on a group of people attending Quranic lessons at a mosque near the capital, N'Djamena, on 1 August 1992. A second teenage boy died in hospital and at least 14 other people, including an eight-month-old baby, were wounded. All of the victims came from Chad's Ouaddai community from the east of the country.

The authorities sent the gendarmes to arrest 52-year-old Faky Ali Ahmat (Faky is the title for a Quranic teacher) and his followers because they had built a mosque on an unapproved site in Diguel-Est, a suburb of N'Djamena. The gendarmes were reportedly under instructions to open fire if Faky Ali Ahmat resisted arrest.

The Chadian authorities say that an internal investigation found that the gendarmes had used firearms in self defence. However, eyewitnesses allege that this was not the case and that there was no threat to the lives of the gendarmes. Relatives of the victims called for an independent and impartial inquiry into the killing, but this was refused by the government. The relatives are now seeking to bring a legal action against the authorities.

Following the killings, Djimet Ib, the Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, resigned in protest from the government accusing officials of the Ministry of the Interior of instructing the gendarmes to shoot Faky Ali Ahmat if he resisted arrest.

Amnesty International believes that Faky Ali Ahmat and his followers were extrajudicially executed and is calling on the authorities to take urgent steps to prevent further extrajudicial executions.

Over the past 30 years, tens of thousands of people have been extrajudicially executed by members of Chad's security forces. In May 1992, a government-established commission of inquiry reported that up to 40,000 people had been extrajudicially executed between 1982 and 1990, under the government of President Hisssein Habré.

Hundreds more have been killed since President Idriss Deby came to power in December 1990. Many have been killed in custody or during attacks by members of the security forces on known or suspected government opponents. In March 1992, for instance, several Chadian nationals forcibly returned from Nigeria were extrajudicially executed while in custody in N'Djamena; at least 40 others are reported to have died in custody from gross neglect or ill-treatment. There have been no investigations or prosecutions in connection with any of these unlawful killings, and members of the security forces appear to believe that they can continue to violate human rights - including the fundamental right to life - with impunity.

Please write:

- expressing concern at the killing of Faky Ali Ahmat and six others, and the wounding of at least 14 other people by members of the gendarmerie;
- calling for an independent and impartial public inquiry into the killings, and urging that those responsible are brought to justice and the victims compensated;
- expressing concern that the Chadian authorities have failed to investigate reports that hundreds of Chadians have been extrajudicially executed since December 1990, and

urging that a commission of inquiry be set up to investigate the killings and make recommendations to the government on how such killings and other human rights violations can be prevented in future;

- expressing concern that the Chadian authorities have routinely allowed or condoned the use of lethal force by the security forces, and recommending that standing orders on the use of force and firearms, based on the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, be immediately introduced.

Write to:

President

Général Idriss DEBY

Président de la République

Présidence de la République

N'DJAMENA, République du Tchad

Telegrams: President Deby, N'Djamena, Chad

Telexes: 5201 PRESIREP KD;

5307 PRESIREP KD

Faxes: + 235 51 4501

**Salutation: Monsieur le President de la
République/Dear President**

Prime Minister:

Monsieur Joseph YODOYMAN

Premier Ministre

N'DJAMENA, République du Tchad

**Telegrams: Premier Ministre Yodoyman,
N'Djamena, Chad**

Telexes: 5201 PRESIREP KD;

5307 PRESIREP KD

Faxes: + 235 51 4501

**Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre/Dear
Prime Minister**

Increase the power of your letter by sending copies to diplomatic representatives of Chad in your country.

Killings at religious demonstration of the Roman Catholic Church

ZAIRE

Participants in the peaceful demonstration in Kinshasa

At least 37 people, including a 10-year-old boy, were killed when Zaïrian soldiers opened fire on a peaceful demonstration in the capital, Kinshasa, on 16 February 1992. Troops of the elite Special Presidential Division used rifles, hot-water cannons, metal-tipped canes and tear-gas to break up the crowd, many of whom were carrying rosaries and prayer books. The march, organized by members of the Roman Catholic Church, followed a special religious mass for "peace and hope" and called for the resumption of the recently-suspended National Conference to debate political reform.

At the time eyewitnesses said that at least 13 bodies were taken to the General Hospital and St Joseph's church in Matonge district, which was later sealed off by armoured cars. 37 bodies were identified and more than one hundred others were reported to be injured. Several church leaders were arrested, including two Belgian priests who were later expelled from the country.

The National Conference, which included several hundred political groups, was set up in August 1991 to review and reform Zaïre's political system. The Conference finally resumed in April 1992 after a period of suspension, and elected former prisoner of conscience, Etienne Tshisekedi as prime minister in August.

Please write:

- expressing concern at the killing and wounding of dozens of unarmed and peaceful demonstrators on 16 February 1992;
- calling for an immediate independent inquiry into the incident and calling for those responsible for human rights violations to be brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to establish strict guidelines for the use of lethal force in accordance with international standards and to issue public instructions to all members of the security forces that human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, will not be tolerated, and that those responsible for such human rights violations will be brought to justice.

Write to:

The President

Son Excellence le Maréchal
MOBUTU Sese Seko
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema
République du Zaïre

**Telegrams: President Mobutu, Kinshasa,
Zaïre**

Telexes: 21368

**Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear
President**

Prime Minister:

Monsieur Etienne Tshisekedi
Premier Ministre
Hotel du Conseil exécutif
Kinshasa-Gombe
République du Zaïre

Telexes: 21368

**Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre /
Dear Prime Minister**

**Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of
Zaïre in your country.**

Eduardo Aníbal Blanco Araya,
Methodist human rights activist

HONDURAS

In June 1981, Eduardo Aníbal Blanco Araya, a human rights activist in the Methodist Church, and his wife Gabriela Jiménez left their native Costa Rica to search for work in Honduras. Six months later, Eduardo Aníbal Blanco "disappeared". He had left his home in Comayagua at midday on 14 November, telling his wife that he would be back by 7pm. Later that day, three men who identified themselves as agents of the *Dirección Nacional de Investigaciones* (National Directorate of Investigations - DNI), the investigative branch of the *Fueya de Seguridad Pública*, Public Security Force, (FUSEP) came to search his house and question his wife, but Eduardo Aníbal Blanco never returned. Gabriela Jiménez called the Costa Rican Embassy in Honduras but they were unable to find her husband. Alarmed, she visited hospitals, police stations and military outposts, but to no avail.

Eduardo Aníbal Blanco Araya

A series of anonymous death threats forced Gabriela Jiménez and her four-month-old son to return to Costa Rica in November 1981. A month later, a released prisoner said he had spoken to Eduardo Aníbal Blanco in the General Casamata barracks, a detention centre in Tegucigalpa used by FUSEP. Honduran government representatives later told Amnesty International that Eduardo Aníbal Blanco had not been detained by either the DNI or FUSEP, but that illegal weapons and ammunition had been discovered during a search of the Blanco home. Relatives and others denied the arms allegation and said that he was not involved with any organization that used or advocated violence.

Amnesty International received further reports in March 1982 indicating that Eduardo Aníbal Blanco was still alive and in the custody of the Honduran security forces. In response to Amnesty International's inquiries about these reports, the Honduran Foreign Affairs Ministry stated that investigations would continue. More than ten years later the current government has made repeated yet unfulfilled promises to investigate the fate of Eduardo Aníbal Blanco and the more than 100 people who are believed "disappeared" at the hands of state between 1979 and 1989. However, the government appears in practice to be intent on consigning the issue of the "disappeared" to the past.

Please write to the Honduran authorities:

- urging the need for an impartial and exhaustive investigation into the case of Eduardo Aníbal Blanco Araya and other victims of "disappearance" by an independent and impartial commission

- making clear that AI welcomes the fact that under this government's administration there have been no long-term "disappearances"; that the government nevertheless has a responsibility to ensure justice is done in the cases of over 100 people who "disappeared" under previous administrations; that Aníbal Blanco's family have a right to learn the full truth about what happened and to seek redress;

- emphasizing that although many years have passed since Aníbal Blanco's "disappearance", time has not lessened the anguish for his relatives and friends or their need to campaign for an explanation of his fate.

Write to:

S.E. Rafael Leonardo Callejas
Presidente de la República de Honduras
Casa Presidencial
6^a Avenida, 1^a Calle
Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

Lic. Leonardo Matute Murillo
Procurador General de la República
Procuraduría General de la República
Calle Principal 107
Colonia Reforma
Tegucigalpa, HONDURAS

Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of Honduras in your country

**Chen Jianzhang, Liu Shuhe, Han Dingxiang,
An Shi'en, Song Weili**
Catholic clergy

CHINA

In November and December 1990 the Chinese authorities arrested five elderly Roman Catholic clergymen in Hebei Province, northern China. Chen Jianzhang, Liu Shuhe, Han Dingxiang, An Shi'en and Song Weili were arrested along with a number of other high-ranking clergymen during one of the government's periodic crackdowns on China's underground Catholic church, which remains loyal to the Vatican and independent of the government-sanctioned Catholic Patriotic Association. The five men remain in incommunicado detention, apparently denied any contact with their families, colleagues or lawyers. All long-term activists in the clandestine Catholic church, they have reportedly been forced to attend "political study" or "re-education seminars" held by the provincial authorities in Hebei Province. Amnesty International considers that they are prisoners of conscience, detained on account of their peaceful religious activities outside the government-sanctioned church.

Chen Jianzhang, the unofficial Bishop of Baoding, is thought to be in his 60s. He has been held since December 1990. Chen Jianzhang is in extremely poor health; he apparently suffers from diabetes and thrombosis, is half-paralysed and confined to a wheelchair. Chen Jianzhang spent more than 20 years in prison for his religious activities before being released in the late 1970s. He was consecrated in 1982 and succeeded Bishop Fan Xueyan to the Diocese of Baoding in 1990. Fan Xueyan was himself subsequently arrested and died in custody at the age of 84.

Liu Shuhe, the 72-year-old unofficial Auxiliary Bishop of Yixian diocese, had previously been imprisoned between 1954 and 1976 and was detained by police for three months before being released in mid-January 1989 under a house arrest order. Liu Shuhe was reportedly re-arrested in late 1990 to prevent him from holding Christmas Mass. In December 1991 his family asked the public security (Police) bureau to release him, but they were reportedly told that the country was providing for him and were warned to ask no further questions. Liu Shuhe had been the assistant to the elderly Bishop Liu Guandong of Yixian, who was himself detained in late 1989 and held for nearly three years.

Han Dingxiang, the unofficial Vicar General of Handan diocese, Hebei Province, was summoned in December 1990 by public security (police) officers to attend a "study seminar" on the evils of pornography, and covert activities, at Yongnian in Hebei Province. The 56-year-old priest, who was ordained in 1986, had previously been imprisoned from 1960 to 1979 and for two months in 1989.

An Shi'en, the unofficial Vicar General of Daming, Hebei Province, aged 78, and **Song Weili**, the 76-year-old unofficial Bishop of Langfang Diocese, were arrested in late 1990 or early 1991.

Please write to the Chinese authorities

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of the five Roman Catholic clergymen, who have been detained for two years.
- expressing concern about the health of Chen Jianzhang, believed to suffer from diabetes and thrombosis, and urging the authorities to provide him with medical treatment.

Please include a sample of the prisoner's name in Chinese characters in all your letters to the authorities. This will help the authorities to identify the prisoner in the event that they have difficulty understanding languages other than Chinese.

Write to:

(Director of the Bureau of Religious Affairs
of the State Council)

REN Wuzhi Juzhang
Guowuyuan Zongjiao Shiwuju
Guowuyuan
22 Xianmen Dajie
Beijingshi 100017
People's Republic of China

(Director of the No. 2 Religious Affairs
Department of the State Council - dealing
with Catholicism and Christianity)

LIU Yide Sizhang
Guowuyuan Zongjiao Shiwuju
Yewu 2 Si
22 Xianmenlu Xichengqu
Beijingshi 100017
People's Republic of China

(Director of Hebei Province Public
Security Bureau)

ZHOU Liqian Tingzhang
Gongquanting
Zhongshanlu
Shijiazhuangshi 050051
Hebeisheng
People's Republic of China

Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of China in your country

Father Moon Kyu-hyun
Catholic priest

SOUTH KOREA

Father Moon Kyu-hyun, former head of the Education Department in Chongju diocese, and Im Su-Kyong, a Catholic student, were arrested in August 1990 as they crossed the border from North Korea. Im Su-Kyong had defied a South Korean government ban by attending the World Festival of Youth and Students in Pyongyang, North Korea, as a representative of a student organization called *Chondaehyop*. Father Moon had joined her in Pyongyang to help her return across the border. He had been sent by the Catholic Priests Association for Justice, which wanted "to show support for the cause of patriotic students yearning for reunification of their Fatherland".

The two had attempted to cross the border at the United Nations-controlled village of Panmunjom in July, but were denied entry because there had been no previous agreement from the South Korean authorities. Father Moon and Im Su-kyong went on hunger-strike for five days to press their demand to be allowed to cross the demarcation line. They crossed the border on

Father Moon Kyu-hyun

15 August and were immediately taken into custody by the South Korean authorities.

Father Moon was taken to the National Police Headquarters for interrogation and was not allowed to see his lawyers and relatives for more than two weeks. He was accused of illegally visiting North Korea, praising North Korea and of publicly blaming the United States and South Korea for the division of the country. After a trial before the Seoul District Criminal Court, Father Moon was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment and Im Su-kyong received a ten-year prison sentence. In delivering the verdict, the presiding judge said that "by providing the North with information on the South Korean dissident and opposition movement, they had helped the North militarily". Both sentences were reduced to five years following appeals to the High Court in June 1990.

Please write to the South Korean authorities,

-calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Father Moon Kyu-hyun and Im Su-Kyong, whom AI considers to be prisoners of conscience held for their peaceful political views and activities.

Write to:

Mr KIM Ki-choon
Ministry of Justice
1 Chungang-dong
Kwachon-myon
Shihung-gun
Kyonggi Province
Republic of Korea

Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of South Korea in your country

Thich Tue Sy and Thich Tri Sieu

Thich Tri Sieu and Thich Tue Sy - along with a number of other Buddhist monks and nuns - were arrested in April 1984 and accused of membership of the Free Viet Nam Force, an illegal organization. Both were sentenced to death in 1988 but had their sentences commuted to 20 years' imprisonment by the Supreme People's Court. Amnesty International believes that they are prisoners of conscience, held for the peaceful expression of their religious beliefs.

Thich Tri Sieu is believed to be held in Z30A "re-education" camp, Xuan Loc, Dong Nai province. Thich Tue Sy was reportedly transferred to the remote A20 "re-education" camp at Xuan Phuoc, Phu Khanh province in late 1989.

More than 60 percent of Vietnam's population are Buddhists. The Viet Nam Buddhist Church, the only Buddhist organization approved and recognised by the government, was established in 1981. Many Buddhist monks and nuns who opposed the establishment of a single Buddhist organization, and who openly criticized the authorities over religious persecution and other human rights violations, were subsequently arrested and sentenced to long prison terms. Dozens of them were released in late 1989, but at least eight Buddhist monks arrested in 1982 and 1984 remain in detention or under house arrest for "national security" reasons. Among them are prisoners of conscience Thich Tri Sieu and Thich Tue Sy.

Please write:

-seeking the immediate and unconditional release of Thich Tri Sieu and Thich Tue Sy and other prisoners of conscience in Vietnam.

Write to:

Vo Van Kiet

Prime Minister
Ha Noi
Socialist Republic of Viet Nam

Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of Viet Nam in your country

Bahman Samandari,
Baha'i

IRAN

Bahman Samandari, a travel agent and a member of a prominent Baha'i family in Teheran, was summarily and secretly executed at Evin Prison in March 1992, after being summoned there to sign some documents. No reason for his execution has been given by the judicial or prison authorities, nor have they disclosed the location of his grave.

Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of followers of the Baha'i faith, a religion not recognized by Iran's Constitution, have been imprisoned, tortured or executed, apparently because of their religious beliefs. Between 1979 and 1989 more than 200 Baha'is were reportedly executed in Iran.

Many thousands of prisoners have been executed in Iran since the proclamation of the Islamic Republic in 1979. More than 2,500 political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, were executed between July 1988 and January 1989. Executions often take place after secret summary trials.

Please write to the Iranian authorities

- expressing your dismay at the execution of Bahman Samandari in March 1992;
- calling on the authorities to explain why he was executed and to disclose to his family the location of his grave;
- expressing outrage at the high number of executions carried out in Iran each year;
- calling on the authorities to stop all executions, which are cruel, inhuman and degrading, and the ultimate violation of the fundamental right to life.

Write to:

His Excellency Hojatoleslam
Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani
The Presidency
Palestine Avenue
Azerbaijan Intersection
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Telegrams: President Rafsanjani, Tehran, Iran

Telexes: 214231 MITI IR, 213113 PRIM IR

Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of Iran in your country

Al-Sayyid Hassan al-Qubanji, an 82-year-old Shi'a Muslim and well-known mosque preacher in southern Iraq, is married and has 21 children. He "disappeared" after he was arrested in late March or early April 1991 in the al-Huwaish district of al-Najaf. His present whereabouts are not known.

Iraqi military, intelligence and security personnel carried out massacres, torture and widespread and arbitrary detentions during a mass uprising, which began on 1 March 1991 in southern Iraq and spread to the Kurdish regions of the north before being crushed a month later. Many of the victims were unarmed civilians, including women and children. In the al-Najaf area, religious scholars and students of religion were specifically targeted.

Amnesty International has the names of 106 people arrested in al-Najaf in March and April 1991, including Shi'a Muslims from Iraq, Iran

Al-Sayyid Hassan Al-Qubanjī and other countries. Their fate and whereabouts have remained unknown.

The Iraqi government has failed to respond to Amnesty International's appeals for information on these detainees; the organization fears they may have been tortured or executed.

In his report of 18 February 1992 to the Commission on Human Rights, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Iraq stated that the Government of Iraq has been waging a concerted attack against the Shi'a clergy at al-Najaf and that many are now under arrest or "disappeared".

Please write:

- expressing concern about the "disappearance" of Shi'a clergy arrested in al-Najaf;
- insisting that the whereabouts of Al-Sayyid Hassan al-Qubanji be revealed, and that he be given access to his relatives and medical and legal experts;
- urging that he is immediately and unconditionally released unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial.

Write to:

His Excellency President Saddam Hussain
c/o His Excellency Nizar Hamdoun
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative to the United Nations
Permanent Mission of Iraq to the United Nations
14 East 79th Street
New York, NY 10021, USA

**Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representatives of Iraq
in your country**

Abdesalam Yassine
Founder of Islamic association

MOROCCO

Abdesalam Yassine, the spiritual leader and founder of an Islamic association known as *al-Adl w'al-Ihsan* (Justice and Charity), has been held under house arrest since January 1990 apparently as a result of an administrative decision. He has been neither charged nor convicted of any criminally punishable offence. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, who is physically restricted because of the non-violent exercise of his conscientiously held beliefs.

In the early 1980s Abdesalam Yassine and his followers sought permission to make *al-Adl w'al-Ihsan* a legally authorized political party. The Moroccan authorities refused, but allowed the applicants to establish the organization as an Islamic charitable association. The association aims to Islamicise modern society, rather than modernize Islam, and has no known links with any foreign association or government. In 1989 Abdesalam Yassine said: "We are against violence of any kind. This is a basic principle...we represent the Islam of the wise...We rely on the people's choice. Our ambition is to get to power by popular consent."

Between October 1989 and March 1990 scores of members of al-'Adl wa'l-Ihsan were rounded up by police. Some were released after interrogation but a number were charged with offences, including the setting up of an illegal organization, and brought to trial. On 13 January 1990 five members of the association's governing body were arrested outside Abdesalam Yassine's house in Sale and he himself was placed under house arrest.

The five members of the council were tried in May 1990 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment. They have now been released, but Abdesalam Yassine continues to be held under house arrest. Only his wife is allowed to remain with him. She may leave the house but when she does remains under surveillance. However, Abdesalam Yassine's daughter is not allowed to visit him.

In July 1992 three lawyers lodged a complaint against the Minister of the Interior, Driss Basri, the Director of National Security and the Governor of Sale, alleging that Abdesalam Yassine was being unlawfully detained, but so far no action has been taken on the case by the courts.

Please write to the Moroccan authorities

-urging an immediate end to the house arrest of prisoner of conscience Abdesalam Yassine, who has been physically restricted because of the non-violent exercise of his conscientiously held beliefs;

-urging that he is allowed regular contact with his relatives and access to his doctor and lawyer.

Write to:

Sa Majesté
King Hassan II
Bureau de Sa Majesté le Roi
Palais Royal
Rabat

MOROCCO

Telex 31744 or 32908
M Driss Basri
Ministère de l'Intérieur
et de l'Information

Quartier Administratif
Rabat
MOROCCO

Telex 36161, 36731, 36969
ProCivile Rabat

**Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to diplomatic representatives of Morocco
in your country.**

Naji Jasib al-Tuhaifa
Member of Islamic organization

SAUDI ARABIA

Naji Jasib al-Tuhaifa, a 31-year-old labourer, was arrested in October 1990 in al-'Awamiyya in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia. He is currently detained in *al-Mabahith al-'Ammah* (General Intelligence) Prison in al-Dammam, where he is reportedly being held without trial on suspicion of being a sympathizer or member of *Munadhamat al-Thawra al-Islamiyya fil Jazira al-'Arabiyya*, the Organization of Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula (OIRAP).

OIRAP was founded in 1975, four years before the Iranian revolution. Influenced by the ideas of Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad al-Shirazi, the organization defines its mission as "educating and enlightening the masses". It believes that the Shi'a Muslim community in Saudi Arabia is discriminated against by the ruling Sunni majority and has urged the government to grant the Shi'a equal rights.

Naji Jasib al-Tuhaifa

OIRAP's publications neither support nor advocate violence or armed action. Amnesty International believes that Naji al-Tuhaifa is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the non-violent expression of his political and religious beliefs.

Naji al-Tuhaifa was allegedly tortured during interrogation. Other political detainees in Saudi Arabia have reported that they were tortured or ill-treated and held in solitary confinement both before and throughout their interrogation. At least two alleged OIRAP members, Sa'ud Hamad and Ahmad Mahdi Khamis, were reportedly tortured to death in the custody of the *al-Mabahith al-'Ammah* in 1981 and 1986 respectively.

Please write to the Saudi Arabian authorities,

-expressing concern at the detention of Naji Jasib al-Tuhaifa, apparently without trial, since 1990 and calling for his immediate and unconditional release

-expressing concern at the reported deaths in custody under torture of Sa'ud Hamad and Ahmed Mahdi Khamis, and urging a full, impartial investigation into the circumstances.

Write to:

The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
King Fahd bin 'Abd al-'Aziz
Office of the Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines
Riyadh
Saudi Arabia

Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy to the diplomatic representative of Saudi Arabia in your country

Dimitrios Tsironis, aged 21, was arrested in March 1992 at the Army Camp in Kozani after he refused to enlist in the armed forces. As a Jehovah's Witness, his religious beliefs do not allow him to serve in the armed forces in any capacity, and there is no provision in Greece for performing alternative civilian service. Dimitrios Tsironis was sentenced to four years' imprisonment in June by the Military Court of Thessaloniki.

For the first month of his imprisonment, Dimitrios Tsironis was held in a disciplinary cell. He was allegedly beaten by military policemen, who also subjected him to psychological abuse, including pointing their guns at him, threatening him and making obscene and derisive remarks about his religious beliefs.

Conditions improved in April, when he was transferred to Sindos Military Prison, where scores of other conscientious objectors are held. Conscientious objectors in Sindos organize their own work and can move about freely within the prison.

Dimitrios Tsironis is one of some 400 conscientious objectors, mostly Jehovah's Witnesses, imprisoned in Greece. Greek law allows those who object to military service on the grounds of conscience to perform unarmed military service lasting twice as long as normal military service, but this is unacceptable to Jehovah's Witnesses since they believe that such service furthers military aims. Those who refuse to do any form of military service are given four-year prison sentences which are reduced to about 30 months if they do prison work. Amnesty International considers all of them to be prisoners of conscience and has repeatedly called on successive Greek Governments to release them and introduce alternative civilian service of non-punitive length.

In failing to introduce alternative civilian service for conscientious objectors the Greek authorities have ignored calls on all governments to do so, made by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers and the European Parliament. Despite numerous promises, successive Greek Governments have not taken any concrete steps towards bringing their legislation into line with international standards.

Please write to the Greek authorities

-calling for the release of Dimitrios Tsironis and all of the other conscientious objectors and for the introduction of alternative civilian service of non-punitive length for conscientious objectors to military service.

Write to:

Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis
Office of the Prime Minister
Megaron Maximou
Herodou Atticou Avenue

106 74 Athens, Greece

Increase the power of your letter by sending a copy of your letter to the Greek Embassy in your country