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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 96/93

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 21 AUGUST 1993

AI INDEX: NWS 11/96/93  
DISTR: SC/PO  
NO OF WORDS: 2220

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - TIBET, YEMEN, SWEDEN

PLEASE NOTE: The IS will be sending the item on Sweden immediately to international media, in the light of the urgency of the case. Press officers should draw this item to the attention of the refugee coordinator in their section. Any inquiries should be made to the Swedish section.

Previous AI material relating to this case:

a. UA was issued in this case on 8 June 1993 -- UA 183/93 (EUR 42/01/93). We are issuing an update around now

b. The case of her "disappeared" brother is dealt with in UA 452/90 (AMR 46/49/90) and in external document AMR 46/40/92 (August 1992)

c. The case of Dr Augusto Zúñiga, the lawyer working on the case of her brother who had his arm blown off by a letter bomb, is dealt with in UA 104/91, AMR 46/11/91, 19 March 1991

## NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

### INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Saudi Arabia - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

Sudan - 29 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

### TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Sierra Leone - 12 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 90

ICM - 14 or 15 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 95

Angola - 20 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 90

Yemen - 26 August - Included in this news service. SEE NEWS SERVICE 95

North Korea - 1 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

### FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Myanmar - 8 October (International).

EJEs and "Disappearances" - 20 October (International)

Venezuela - 10 November (International, linked to EJEs & Disappearances)

AI INDEX: ASA 17/WU 10/93 EXTERNAL  
12 AUGUST 1993

**CHINA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FEARS MASS ARRESTS IN TIBET AS MILITARY SURROUND VILLAGES**

Reports have just come in that hundreds of Chinese soldiers surrounded a group of villages in the south of the Tibet Autonomous Region and have arbitrarily arrested around 35 Tibetans, following pro-independence demonstrations. Although the operation began in June, arrests are still going on.

On 28 June 1993 villagers from Kyimshi in Gongkar county, Lhokha Prefecture, issued an appeal for help from the international community and the United Nations because 1,700 soldiers had surrounded their villages and "terrorised" the inhabitants. From 6 July the troops began setting up machine gun posts on the mountain side trained at the villages, the appeal said. Armed government officials are reportedly conducting house-to-house searches and three soldiers are guarding each house.

According to the appeal, by 5 July 35 laypeople and monks had been arrested from Kyimshi or from the nearby monasteries of Sungrabing and Dunbu Choekor, and the arrests are still continuing. "At present the people in this village are in a state of turmoil, living under tension and terror", wrote the authors of the appeal.

The demonstrations were reportedly sparked off when the villagers rejected the election of new //ar Chinese village leaders, which led to monks and villagers calling for Tibetan independence - usually Tibetans are chosen. A number of villagers are reported to have been roughly handled by the soldiers. The appeal names three monks, two nuns and seven male farmers arrested by the troops, who were threatened with guns. There are unconfirmed reports of Chinese soldiers taking over at least two other villages near Lhasa, namely Nemo in Phenpo Lhundrup and Samdrupling in Lhokha Gongkar, after similar protests in June.

From the end of April to the beginning of July 1993, 107 Tibetans have reportedly been detained either for their involvement in activities in support of dissidents in Tibet or for taking part in independence protests, which have taken place in Lhasa and the surrounding areas over the last few months. So far this year the Chinese authorities have only confirmed the detention of three Tibetans in connection with political activities. One of these is Gendun Rinchen, a 46 year old tour guide, arrested for monitoring human rights on 13 May 1993 shortly before the arrival in Lhasa of a European Community delegation.

Demonstrations have continued in Lhasa since 24 and 25 May 1993 when major protests involving 2,000 people took place, which resulted in a number of arrests and casualties on both sides. The 24 May protest, ostensibly against sharp price rises and rent increases, soon turned into a pro-independence rally, the largest since 1989 when hundreds of people were arrested and martial law was declared.

Students at the University of Tibet, who have not staged a demonstration in Lhasa since the 1989 democracy movement, are now known to have made preparations for a protest march through Lhasa on 30 May, although the purpose of their proposed demonstration is not known. The University authorities prohibited the march and threatened students with expulsion if they joined, watched or discussed any demonstrations.

On 14 June 1993 12 nuns from Garu, one of Tibet's leading nunneries just outside Lhasa, were arrested, including Gyaltzen Palsang, a 15-year-old novice. According to unofficial reports they were not staging a protest at the time. Their arrest is believed to be part of a crackdown on Buddhist nuns to deter them from leading further pro-independence protests.

On 21 June Lhakpa, a primary school teacher from Nemo village, 45km north of Lhasa, was arrested for alleged involvement in political activities. According to local sources Lhakpa had been beaten during or shortly after his arrest and is believed to be in a serious condition. In the same village on 26 June farmers overturned a police car in order to free two monks from Nemo Monastery who were being driven to the county jail. The monks had been arrested after police found pro-independence documents during a search of the monastery. The next

**morning 200 soldiers despatched by the authorities reportedly surrounded the village and arrested four people. Unconfirmed reports claim that the four were tortured. Two of the detainees were named as Ngawang Tsering and Tsewang, both men.**

**Amnesty International believes that many of these Tibetan detainees may be prisoners of conscience held solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression. Amnesty International has urged the authorities to release immediately and unconditionally any Tibetans who took part peacefully in demonstrations. It has sent the Chinese Government a list of 87 names of Tibetans believed to have been arrested for political offences during April, May and June 1993.**

**Amnesty International has urged the Chinese authorities to make public details of the whereabouts of and charges against any Tibetans still detained. It has also urged the authorities to ensure that villagers are protected from ill-treatment at the hands of troops, and that Tibetan detainees are protected from torture and ill-treatment and are granted prompt access to relatives and to a lawyer of their choice.**

AI INDEX: MDE 31/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL  
EMBARGOED FOR 26 AUGUST 1993

**YEMEN: POLITICAL PRISONERS STILL BEHIND BARS**

Between 23 and 41 political prisoners are still behind bars in northern Yemen - some of them after more than a decade in prison - after blatantly unfair trials or even after being acquitted.

All of them are members of the former National Democratic Front (NDF), held since the 1980s. At least one of them, Mansur Rajih, is a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the non-violent expression of his political beliefs - despite this, he is facing the death penalty.

Amnesty International has repeatedly raised the cases of NDF prisoners with the relevant Yemeni authorities. In April and May 1992, 27 members of the former NDF, including 16 who had been sentenced to death, were released and their sentences quashed by Presidential Decree. Amnesty International welcomed these releases but continues to be concerned about those still held.

Many of the NDF prisoners were denied access to legal counsel, either during pre-trial detention or during the trials; some were tried in absentia, even though they were in custody at the time of their trial; and some were convicted on the basis of "confessions" extracted under torture. Furthermore, when legal counsel was available to the defence it was often denied the same opportunities as the prosecution to bring and cross-examine witnesses.

Most of the 23 NDF prisoners known to be currently in custody were held incommunicado for periods of up to three years. Some were severely tortured during this time by beatings on the soles of the feet and other parts of the body, electric shocks, sleep deprivation, exposure to extreme temperatures, cigarette burns, fingernail removal and "Kentucky Chicken" or *tal'liq* (suspension from a metal bar inserted between the knees and elbows while the wrists are tied together). The victims were reportedly tortured in order to force them to "confess" to criminal acts or to extract information about the NDF and its activities. At least 15 of the 23 are believed to be currently under sentence of death.

Mansur Rajih, for example, was sentenced to death for murder, a crime Amnesty International believes he did not commit. During the first two to three years of his detention he was tortured severely and asked to "confess" to criminal acts including murder.

At his trial supposed eye-witnesses failed to identify him - but the judge ruled that was because of their "poor eye-sight". Defence witnesses, among them relatives of the murder victim, said the eye-witnesses were not present at the crime, but the judge ruled that defence witnesses were "mentally ill". Another defence witness was threatened and imprisoned when he refused to alter his testimony. Despite this blatantly unfair trial, Mansur Rajih was sentenced to death.

Amnesty International is now calling on the government of Yemen to act quickly to commute death sentences passed on all political prisoners; quash the death sentence of Mansur Rajih and immediately and unconditionally release him as a prisoner of conscience; set up a judicial review into the cases of all political prisoners named in the document; and establish an independent public commission of inquiry to conduct prompt and impartial investigations of all reports of torture and deaths in custody.

AI INDEX: EUR 42/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL  
12 AUGUST 1993

**SWEDEN: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FEARS FORCIBLE RETURN OF ASYLUM SEEKER**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned that Mónica Castillo Páez, a 20-year-old asylum-seeker in Sweden, is about to be forcibly returned to Peru. Amnesty International believes that in Peru she would be at risk of arrest, "disappearance", torture or extrajudicial execution. Amnesty International is making a final urgent appeal to the Swedish authorities to abide by their international obligations for the protection of refugees and to give her protection in Sweden.

Mónica Castillo's brother, Ernesto Rafael Castillo Páez, "disappeared" after detention in October 1990, and is now presumed dead. One of her cousins was killed in 1989. In both cases the security forces are thought to have been responsible. In March 1991, having previously received death threats, Dr Augusto Zúñiga, a human rights lawyer investigating the "disappearance" of her brother, received a letter-bomb that blew off one of his arms. The bomb was in an envelope which was said to bear an official stamp on it. Shortly afterwards, he fled the country.

Mónica Castillo's parents have stated they have received numerous threats from persons thought to be acting with the support of the security forces. These threats were made in the context of efforts to clarify their son's "disappearance".

Shortly after the "disappearance" of Mónica Castillo's brother, the police went several times to her home in search of her. Fearing that she would face the same fate as her brother, she decided to leave the country in December 1990. She went to Sweden where she had a relative living and where she intended to seek asylum.

On 1 October 1992 the Swedish Government rejected Mónica Castillo's application for asylum. From March to June 1993 several new applications were presented on her behalf, but all these applications were rejected. The Swedish authorities stated that the circumstances invoked and the documents submitted in support of her claim did not constitute sufficient grounds for granting her asylum, and there were not sufficient humanitarian grounds for granting a residence permit.

A re-hearing was held on 12 August to examine if there was any new information in the case. The authorities' decision on this last application is expected very shortly. When Mónica Castillo appeared at the hearing she was taken into custody by the authorities. Amnesty International thus fears that she is being held by the authorities in preparation for her deportation to Perú.

Amnesty International believes that, if returned to Peru, Mónica Castillo's close family connection with Ernesto Castillo will put her at grave risk of arrest, "disappearance", torture or extrajudicial execution at the hands of the security forces.

This is just one of several cases during the past year or so where Peruvians have been refused asylum in Sweden, despite there having been strong grounds in at least some of these cases to indicate that they would be at risk on return to Peru. Amnesty International believes that if the Swedish authorities return Mónica Castillo to Peru it would contravene Sweden's obligations as a party to international treaties. In particular, under Article 33 of the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Sweden is obliged not to return any person to a country where they risk serious human rights violations, and Article 3.1 of the 1984 Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment prohibits states from returning people to countries where they are at risk of torture.

Amnesty International has repeatedly expressed its opposition to the forcible return of Mónica Castillo Páez to Peru. It is now making this final urgent appeal to the Swedish authorities on no account to forcibly return her and to give her effective and durable protection in Sweden.