

AI Index: NWS 22/01/96

Date: August 1996

AUGUST WORLDWIDE APPEALS

Turkey

Fifteen-year-old Sevgi Kaya and her 16-year-old brother were detained on the night of 8 February 1996 at their home in Istanbul. They are held at Sađmalcølar Prison in Istanbul and have been charged with membership of an illegal organization. Sevgi Kaya alleged that they were both tortured during 12 days of incommunicado detention.

In her statement Sevgi Kaya said:

“When I said I wasn’t a member of an illegal organization, they beat me on the hands and soles of my feet. My hands swelled up and became purple, and my feet were hurting at least as much as my hands, so that I couldn’t walk properly... In the middle of the night they came again and pulled me by my hair to a room where my brother was. I could see that he also had been tortured. They told us to confess. They undressed us by force. With thick truncheons they started beating me on my arms and my brother on his legs; then they switched and beat my legs and his arms... I was separated from my brother and taken to a room upstairs. There I was insulted and beaten. After that they made me sit on a chair, then they tied my arms with a rope to a beam... Then I was hoisted with my arms, tied to the beam. While I was hanging they told me that I would become paralysed. They threatened to kill me... Because the hanging lasted so long, I fainted. I only regained consciousness when they poured water over me.”

A report by the state Forensic Medicine Institute on Sevgi Kaya’s medical examination described bruising in the middle of the inner side of both soles and on the soft inner area of the palms of both hands.

Please write, protesting at the extended incommunicado detention of a juvenile; asking for a prompt, impartial and thorough investigation into the allegations of torture, and for those found responsible to be brought to justice, to: President Süleyman Demirel/ Basbakanløđø/ Ankara/ Turkey.

Cuba

Dr Leonel MoreJON Almagro, a 31-year-old-lawyer, is one of the founding members and the National Delegate of Concilio Cubano, Cuban Concilium, a coalition of some 140 unofficial groups of different kinds, including political and human rights groups. He is currently serving a 15-month sentence in Valle Grande Prison, on charges of “resistance” and “disrespect”. AI considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

Since the establishment of the Concilio Cubano in October 1995, many of its members, including Dr Morejón, were detained for questioning and reportedly threatened that if they did not give up their activities or leave the country, they would be imprisoned. In mid-February 1996 a major crackdown on the Concilio Cubano began and dozens of its members were arrested.

On 15 February 1996 Dr Morejón was taken to a police station, where he went on a hunger strike to protest at his detention and was reportedly put under pressure by the authorities to sign incriminating statements.

At his trial on 23 February, he was sentenced to six months’ imprisonment for resisting an official in the exercise of his duties, apparently because when plainclothes State Security police went to arrest him, he asked them to identify themselves and to see a warrant. His lawyer was only given access to Dr Morejón and the details of his case a few hours before the trial took place.

On 8 March, following an appeal requested by the prosecution, he was given an additional nine-month prison sentence for showing lack of respect for an official, making a total sentence of 15 months.

Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Dr Leonel Morejón Almagro, to: Dr Fidel Castro Ruz/ President of the Councils of State and Ministers/ Havana/ Cuba.

Saudi Arabia

Sheikh Salman bin Fahd al-'Awda, a religious scholar aged about 40, has been held without charge or trial since his arrest on 13 September 1994. After his arrest he was held in incommunicado detention for months before being allowed family visits.

Sheikh Salman bin Fahd al-'Awda is a prominent religious figure and critic of the state. It is believed that he was arrested for giving public lectures criticizing the general policies of the government. He is not known to have been charged with any recognizably criminal offence and has been denied access to a defence lawyer. AI is concerned that he may be held solely for his criticism of government policy, and as such AI would consider him to be a prisoner of conscience.

Sheikh Salman bin Fahd al-'Awda, who is being held in al-Hair Prison, is among hundreds of alleged Sunni Islamist opponents of the government believed to be currently detained, most of them without charge or trial. They have been held following a wave of arrests which began in April 1994 after two opposition group offices were opened in London, United Kingdom. Some of those arrested were later released, but many continue to be detained. AI fears that they may be subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

In April 1996 Sheikh Salman bin Fahd al-'Awda and other detainees at al-Hair Prison held a hunger strike to protest at poor conditions and their imprisonment without trial. This resulted in a slight improvement, but they are still being denied access to defence lawyers and doctors.

Please write, asking that Sheikh Salman bin Fahd al-'Awda be immediately and unconditionally released unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial in accordance with international standards, and seeking assurances that he is being treated humanely, to: His Royal Highness/ Prince Naif bin 'Abdul-'Aziz/ Minister of the Interior/ Ministry of the Interior/ PO Box 2833/ Airport Road/ Riyadh 11134/ Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.