

DECEMBER 1998 WORLDWIDE APPEALS

CHAD – PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Ngarléjy Yorongar le Moïban, the leader and only parliamentary representative of the opposition party Front d'action pour la République/parti fédération (FAR), has been sentenced to three years' imprisonment and a fine of 500,000 CFA (US\$900) because of his peaceful opposition to the government.

In July 1997 Ngarléjy Yorongar le Moïban severely criticized Idriss Déby, President of Chad, and Wadal Addelkader Kamougué, President of the National Assembly, for their alleged links with Elf, a multinational oil company. As a result his parliamentary immunity was lifted and on 3 June 1998 he was arrested on charges of defamation.

He was tried in July 1998 alongside two journalists, Madame Sy Koumbo Singa Gali and Polycarpe Togamissi, who were fined 1,000,000 CFA (US\$1,800) each for "complicity in the defamation". An AI observer reported that their trial was demonstrably unfair – all three were denied the opportunity to prepare an adequate defence, and at one hearing their lawyers were not permitted to speak. The sentences far exceeded the maximum penalties prescribed by law.

Ngarléjy Yorongar le Moïban's defence lawyers have submitted an appeal, but the date of the hearing is not known. Meanwhile, he continues to be held in harsh and disease-ridden conditions.

Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Ngarléjy Yorongar le Moïban; seeking assurances that while his detention continues he is allowed access to medical care; and asking that the irregularities in trial and pre-trial proceedings be taken into consideration and that all charges be dropped when his case and those of Madame Sy Koumbo Singa Gali and Polycarpe Togamissi are reviewed. Send letters to Général Idriss Deby, Président de la République, Présidence de la République, BP 74 N'djamema, Chad (faxes: 235 51 45 01).

TUNISIA – Prisoners of conscience / Torture and ill-treatment

Sixteen youths, most of them students, have been in detention since February 1998 following student strikes in protest at living and studying conditions.

The charges brought against the youths include "links with a criminal and terrorist gang", "spreading false information", and "distributing leaflets". Some were reportedly tortured during secret detention following their arrests. None of the accused – some of whom have been previously detained as prisoners of conscience – has used or advocated violence. AI considers all of them to be prisoners of conscience.

Over the past years thousands of opponents and critics of the Tunisian government have been detained for the peaceful expression of their beliefs. Torture and ill-treatment are common, especially during secret detention after arrest.

Please write, urging the immediate and unconditional release of the 13 men – Qais Ouislati, Ali Jallouli, Lotfi Hammami, Jalal Bouraoui, Rachid Trabelsi, Ridha Ouislati, Najib Baccouchi, Noureddine Benticha, Chedli Hammami, Taha Sassi, Haikal Mannai, Bourhan Gasmi, Habib Hasni – and the three women – Hinda Aaroui, Imen Derouiche and Hafef Ben Rouina – who were detained in February 1998 for the peaceful expression of their political beliefs; calling for all allegations of torture to be

promptly and fully investigated; and asking for full medical care to be made available to the detainees who request it. Send letters to: M. Abdallah Kallel, Ministre de la Justice, Ministère de la Justice, 31 Boulevard Bab Benat, 1006 Tunis, Tunisia (faxes: 216 1 568 106), and to diplomatic representatives of Tunisia accredited to your country.

CHINA – DEATH PENALTY

Every year, China executes more of its citizens than the rest of the world's countries put together. AI's records show that 1,876 people were executed and that 3,152 people were sentenced to death during 1997 alone. Even these figures are believed to be far below the actual number, as only a fraction are publicly reported, and the number of death sentences passed each year remains a state secret.

Executions normally take place shortly after the death sentence is passed. However, some of those sentenced to death are granted two-year stays of execution. To AI's knowledge, between 15 and 71 people were granted such stays of execution in January 1997. In January 1999, they will either have their sentences commuted to life imprisonment or be executed. Their names are shown in the panel, right, in order of sentencing.

Please write, calling for these death sentences – and all others – to be commuted* ; urging that the use of the death penalty in China be stopped; and expressing opposition to the death penalty as the ultimate form of cruel and inhuman punishment and a violation of the fundamental right to life. Also call for the veil of secrecy surrounding the use of the death penalty in China to be lifted. Send letters to REN Jianxin Yuanzhang, Zuigao Renmin Fayuan, 27 Dongjiao Min Xiang, Beijingshi 100726, People's Republic of China (faxes: 86106 512 5012).

NAME / PLACE OF SENTENCING (JANUARY 1997)

Wei Cangping / Hebei Province

Ye Hongbing / Linan District

Ye Shucheng / Shizuishan City, Ningxia Province

Xi Xianhong / Zhengzhou City, Henan Province

Up to 47 people sentenced in two trials in Henan Province

Zheng Xiuqin and Huang Qingping / Putian City, Fujian Province

Huang Changlin / Guangzhou City, Guangdong Province

Guo Xiaxiong / Nantong City, Jiangsu Province

Xu Xianmin / Yulin District

An unidentified person in Shanwei City, Guangdong Province

Ma Guodong / Lanzhou City, Gansu Province

Guo Xiaobao / Chaohu District, Anhui Province

Maimaiti Musilmu and Liao Jianguo / Xinjiang Uighur Autonomous Region

Wang Jikui / Puyang City, Henan Province

Up to nine people in Shanghai Municipality

*You should name all individuals and places of sentencing in your letters: please cut out or copy the contents of this panel