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Amnesty International Annual Report 2003 Summaries Covering events from January to December 2002

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT 2003 SUMMARIES

**An overview of Amnesty International's Annual Report
Covering events from January to December 2002**

AFRICA
Highlights of Amnesty International Report 2003
Covering events from January to December 2002

The human rights situation remained serious throughout much of the continent. Thousands of lives and livelihoods were destroyed in armed conflicts and civil strife, during which horrendous human rights abuses were committed with impunity. This was the case especially in **Burundi, Central African Republic (CAR), Republic of Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Liberia, Sudan, Senegal, and Uganda.**

Government forces carried out extrajudicial killings, "disappearances", torture and other serious violations, while armed groups unlawfully killed, maimed, abducted and tortured civilians in pursuit of their political aims. Armed belligerents in **Cote d'Ivoire, Burundi, DRC and Liberia** continued to recruit, at times forcefully, child combatants.

Torture and ill-treatment remained widespread, and cases of secret detention for long periods of time continued to be reported in countries as diverse as **Angola, Cameroon, DRC, Eritrea, Kenya, Liberia, Mauritius, Togo and Zimbabwe.** Victims of torture and their relatives continued to suffer harassment from security agents.

The death penalty continued to be imposed extensively by criminal courts in 14 countries, with actual executions in Nigeria, Sudan and Uganda.

Justice for victims of human rights violations took a step backwards in **Angola, Burkina Faso, Burundi, DRC, CAR, Cameroon, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan and Zimbabwe.**

In **Angola**, a halt to the 27-year civil war following the death in February of Jonas Savimbi, leader of the Union for the Total Independence of Angola - UNITA - was followed by a ceasefire agreement that included an amnesty which applied to all military crimes committed during the civil war. Amnesty International expressed concern that this and previous amnesty laws provided a shield for gross human rights abuses.

However, a firm step towards ending impunity for gross human rights abuses committed during the conflict in **Sierra Leone** was taken with the effective setting-up of a UN-sponsored Special Court to try those most responsible for crimes against humanity, war crimes and other serious violations of international humanitarian law.

Hundreds of people, including human rights defenders, remained detained for political reasons in **Cameroon, Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mauritania, Rwanda, Togo and Zimbabwe.** Some of them were possible prisoners of conscience.

Freedom of expression came under attack in 25 countries, including **Burundi, CAR, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Guinea, Rwanda, and Sudan.**

Human Rights Violations in Africa
detailed in Amnesty International's annual report 2003

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS / UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Confirmed or possible extrajudicial executions were carried out in 17 countries: **Burkina Faso, Burundi, CAR, DRC, Congo, Cote d'ivoire, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Uganda, Zimbabwe.**

"DISAPPEARANCES"

People were "disappeared" by state agents in 5 countries: **Burundi, Comoros, Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda.**

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

Victims of torture and ill-treatment by security forces, police and other state authorities were reported in 21 countries: **Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Zimbabwe.**

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Confirmed or possible prisoners of conscience were held in 6 countries: **Chad, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Mauritania, Togo.**

DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL

People were arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge or trial in 17 countries: **Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Cote d'ivoire, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gambia, Liberia, Namibia, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo.**

DEATH PENALTY

People were sentenced to death in 14 countries: **Burundi, CAR, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritania, DRC, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia,** and executions were carried out in 3 countries: **Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda.**

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Armed opposition groups committed serious human rights violations, such as deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and abductions or hostage taking in 14 countries: **Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, Gambia, Liberia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Zimbabwe.**

AMERICAS

Highlights of Amnesty International Report 2003 Covering events from January to December 2002

The past year has witnessed a global drive to push forward national security measures in the context of the 'war against terrorism' often at the expense of human rights. This international climate has threatened human rights protection in the region in a number of significant ways.

The **USA** continued to deny internationally recognised rights to people arrested in the context of the 'war against terrorism'. Thousands were detained from the war in Afghanistan in defiance of international humanitarian law. More than 600 detainees continued to be held at the US naval base, Camp X-Ray, in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where they were held without charge or legal assistance. The USA refused to recognise them as prisoners of war or afford them other rights under international law. Conditions in Camp X-Ray, and later, in Camp Delta, gave cause for serious concern. US forces also held hundreds of detainees in Afghanistan, or in undisclosed locations.

Many of the 1,200 foreign nationals - mostly Muslim men of Arab or South Asian origin -- detained in the **USA** during investigations into the 11 September 2001 attacks were also deprived of safeguards under international law. By the end of the year most detainees arrested during initial sweeps had been deported - some to countries where it was feared they were at risk of being tortured - or were released or charged with crimes unrelated to "terrorism".

The security measures enacted by the new government of Álvaro Uribe Vélez exacerbated the spiralling cycle of political violence in **Colombia**. The breakdown of peace talks in February between the government and the main armed opposition group, the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (FARC), deepened the human rights crisis. The main victims of human rights violations, perpetrated by the army, with their paramilitary allies, and armed opposition groups, continued to be civilians. The statistics are chilling: over the year, more than 500 people "disappeared", over 4,000 civilians were killed for political motives, over 350,000 people were internally displaced in the first nine months of the year, and over 2,700 people were kidnapped, by guerrilla groups or paramilitary forces. The government dragged the civilian population even further into the conflict by creating a million-strong network of civilian informers, who are expected to collaborate with the security forces.

"Anti-terrorism" legislation threatened to corrode human rights protection in **Guyana** and **Paraguay**, whilst **Peru's** "anti-terrorism" legislation continued to deny people a fair trial. In **Canada**, fears increased that people accused of supporting armed Islamist groups were at risk of being deported to countries where they faced a serious risk of torture.

Torture and ill-treatment by security forces and prison guards continued to be recorded across the region, in at least 20 countries, including the **Bahamas, Belize, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, Jamaica, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia** and **Bolivia**. In countries like **Brazil, Ecuador** and **Mexico**, the torture of detainees and prisoners remained widespread. In **Mexico**, a number of detainees reportedly died as a result of torture, whilst in **Paraguay** a 12-year-old boy reported being tortured with an electric prod by two policemen.

Unlawful killings and excessive use of lethal force by security forces continued to be recorded in at least 13 countries, including **Argentina, Guyana, Haiti, Paraguay** and the **USA**. Members of **Brazil's** military and civil police were again responsible for thousands of deaths across the country - 703 police killings in Sao Paulo state alone -- and 'death squads' reportedly continued to act in collusion with the police. Government pledges to investigate killings of children in **Honduras** failed to prevent a rise in

killings in 2002, some in circumstances suggesting extrajudicial executions. In **Jamaica**, at least 133 people were killed by police, many apparently unlawfully. In **Argentina**, demonstrators were killed by police, and in **Venezuela** there were widespread reports of police killings in several states. In the **USA**, at least three people died after being struck by M26 Tasers (dart-firing, high voltage stun guns deployed by US police).

As in previous years, paramilitaries operating in collusion with the security forces in **Colombia** were responsible for the vast majority of the "disappearances", whilst "disappearances" were also reported in **Guatemala** and **Mexico**. In a worrying development, several "disappearances" were reported in **Haiti**, whilst across the region, thousands of families still suffered the daily torture of not knowing what happened to their loved ones who had "disappeared" in previous years.

Human rights abuses escalated region-wide against indigenous people and land activists. In **Brazil**, indigenous people were attacked and killed mainly due to their struggle for land. The human rights situation in **Guatemala** continued to deteriorate, and those principally targeted included land activists. Whilst in countries like **Mexico** and **Argentina**, indigenous communities continued to suffer violence and marginalization.

Across the region, in countries like **Guatemala, Brazil, Colombia, Bolivia, Nicaragua, Honduras, Haiti** and **Ecuador**, human rights defenders -- including trade unionists, journalists and lawyers -- continued to be threatened, attacked or killed. In **Colombia**, over 170 trade unionists had been killed during the year, and, in **Mexico**, the 2001 killing of human rights lawyer, Digna Ochoa, remained unsolved.

The **USA** was once again the only country in the region to carry out executions. By the end of 2002, 71 people had been executed, 33 of them in Texas alone. The **USA** was the only known country in the world to execute juvenile offenders, when three child offenders were executed in Texas. In a positive sign, the US Supreme Court ruled that executing people with mental impairment was unconstitutional.

Harsh prison and jail conditions were reported across the region in countries including **Peru, Bolivia, Ecuador, the USA, Brazil, Uruguay, Jamaica, Belize** and, with cases of deaths in custody being reported in **Brazil** and the **USA**. Many prisoners of conscience remained in detention in **Peru**, and there were more detentions of prisoners of conscience in **Cuba**, showing clearly the authorities' continuing use of harsh measures to stifle dissent.

The lack of effective investigations into violence helped perpetuate a climate of impunity in countries like **Venezuela** and **Colombia**. Meanwhile, the failure to secure justice for the human rights victims of **Guatemala's** 30-year conflict ensured ongoing impunity.

Against this bleak backdrop, there were some advances in the fight against impunity. In **Chile**, although proceedings against former President Augusto Pinochet were dismissed, other investigations into past human rights violations continued. In **Argentina**, a federal judge ordered the preventive detention of former General Leopoldo Fortunato Galtieri and 25 former members of the armed forces and ordered their assets to be frozen. They were accused of responsibility for the kidnapping, illegal detention, torture, "disappearance" and murder of 20 members of the Montoneros armed group in 1978 and 1980. In his ruling, Judge Claudio Bonadio stated that the Full Stop and Due Obedience Laws, passed in 1986 and 1987, were unconstitutional and void. In **Uruguay**, a former Minister of Foreign Affairs was charged with the unlawful imprisonment of Elena Quinteros Almeida who "disappeared" in 1976 after having been forcibly taken from the Venezuelan Embassy where she had taken refuge. This was the first time anyone had been detained for human rights violations committed during military rule.

Human Rights Violations in the Americas

detailed in Amnesty International's annual report 2003

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS / UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Confirmed or possible extrajudicial executions were carried out in 9 countries: **Argentina, Brazil, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Venezuela, Colombia, Dominican Republic**

"DISAPPEARANCES"

People were "disappeared" by state agents in 12 countries: **Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay**

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

Victims of torture and ill-treatment by security forces, police and other state authorities were reported in 20 countries: **Argentina, Bahamas, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Rep, Ecuador, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, St Lucia, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, Venezuela**

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Confirmed or possible prisoners of conscience were held in 2 countries: **Cuba, Peru**

DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL

People were arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge or trial in 7 countries: **Cuba, Ecuador, Jamaica, Mexico, Trinidad and Tobago, USA, Venezuela**

DEATH PENALTY

People were sentenced to death in 7 countries: the **Bahamas, Cuba, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Saint Lucia, USA**, and executions were carried out in 1 country: **USA**.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Armed opposition groups committed serious human rights violations, such as deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and abductions or hostage taking in 1 country: **Colombia**.

ASIA

Highlights of Amnesty International Report 2003 covering events from January to December 2002

Human rights abuses worsened in many **Asia Pacific** countries, particularly in the context of armed conflict, the "war against terrorism" as well as "crackdowns on crime". In the name of combating "terrorism", governments stepped up the repression of their political opponents, detained people arbitrarily, and introduced sweeping and often discriminatory laws that undermined the very foundations of international human rights and humanitarian law in several countries including **Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia, Bangladesh, India, Republic of Korea** and **Australia**.

The world's attention was still on **Afghanistan**, where grave human rights abuses and armed conflict continued. Millions of Afghans - both refugees and those who had remained in the country - faced an uncertain and insecure future. There were widespread abuses of the rights of people detained as suspected *al-Qaeda* members or alleged "terrorists". More than 600 people, captured during the war in Afghanistan, continued to be held at the US base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and an unknown number in Bagram/Afghanistan.

Concerns about the treatment of prisoners in **Afghanistan** continued with reports of dangerous overcrowding, lack of food and medicine, and lack of shelter from severe winter conditions. While the Afghan Interim Authority is formally responsible for detention facilities, under international law, the USA has continuing responsibilities for the welfare of prisoners who were in US custody before being handed over to another country.

In **Pakistan** the authorities handed over more than 400 people to US custody without adequate human rights safeguards, in breach of domestic legislation regarding extradition and the international principle of non-refoulement.

In **Indonesia**, unprecedented human rights trials of suspects accused of committing serious crimes, including crimes against humanity in East Timor in 1999 began in March 2002. But in the absence of basic guarantees it was feared that they would not meet international standards of fairness and that justice would not be delivered.

The Indian authorities failed to protect people from communal violence which led to the deaths of hundreds of people and displacement of thousands. There was international outrage after the attack on a train in Indian **Godhra, Gujarat**, on 27 February -- in which 59 Hindus were killed. Violence of unprecedented brutality targeting the muslim community spread in the state and continued in the following three months. About 140,000 people fled their homes in the aftermath of the massacres and many remained homeless at the end of the year.

Detained asylum seekers in **Australia** were involved in rioting, hunger strikes and lip-sewing in protest at their prolonged mandatory detention. Amnesty International's Secretary General met the Australian authorities to demand for an urgent review of the inhumane ten-year-old policy of mandatory detention saying that it failed on all counts.

In **India**, the parliament enacted the Prevention of Terrorism Act in March, which provided for confessions obtained in police custody to be admissible in courts for "terrorist" offences.

In the meantime in **Bangladesh** the government repealed the Public Safety Act, but continued to detain people under the Special Powers Act (SPA) which overrides safeguards in Bangladeshi law against arbitrary detention. Additionally in October some 40,000 army personnel were deployed across

the country in a joint army police crack down on crime under the name "Operation Clean Heart". By the end of the year, more than 10,000 people including members of the opposition and ruling political parties had been arrested. At least 38 men died, allegedly as a result of torture in army custody. Despite international calls for independent inquiries into these deaths, no investigations were carried out.

In **China** the "strike hard" campaign against crime launched in April 2001 was renewed for a further year resulting in imposition of the death penalty and harsh prison sentences, often after unfair trials in a context in which torture was used to obtain confessions. The campaign was intensified in the run up to the 16th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. At least 1,921 death sentences, many imposed after unfair trials, and 1,060 executions were recorded in 2002.

People continued to be arbitrarily detained or imprisoned for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression, association or belief in many countries including **Vietnam, Laos, North Korea, and China**.

Increasing numbers were detained and held -- among others in **China** and **Vietnam** -- for expressing their views on the Internet or for downloading information critical to the governments or related to the human rights issues.

In the context of the freedom of speech, there were concerns in **Hong Kong** that an Anti Terrorist Ordinance could be used to restrict human rights. The government issued a consultation document about proposed legislation under Article 23 of the Basic Law, which allows Hong Kong to enact its own laws to prohibit acts of treason, secession, sedition and subversion.

There was a sharp rise in the incidence of unlawful killings, "disappearances", torture and arbitrary arrest and detention by security forces, and of deliberate killings, hostage taking and torture by the Maoists in **Nepal**. The abuses were carried out in the context of the "people's war" declared by the Communist Party of Nepal in 1996, and the declaration of a state of emergency and the deployment of the army in late 2001.

Death penalty was used in many of the countries in Asia Pacific region, especially in **China, Singapore, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand, Japan, India, Pakistan** and **Malaysia**.

Gross human rights violations against women occurred in many **Asia-Pacific** countries including **Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, India, Philippines** and **Pakistan**.

In **Sri Lanka**, there was a major improvement in the human rights situation in the context of ceasefire and peace talks between the government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam after 19 years of hostilities. Both sides agreed to incorporate human rights into the peace process.

In **Myanmar** Daw aung San Suu Kyi , leader of the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy, was released from de facto house arrest in May. However, there was no progress in confidential talks about the future of the country, which begun in October 2000, between the ruling military government - the State Peace and Development Council - and Aung San Suu Kyi. However, over 300 political prisoners were released during the year, bringing the total of those released since January 2001 to 500. Some 1,300 political prisoners arrested in previous years remained in prison and some 50 people were arrested for political reasons.

Human Rights Violations in Asia Pacific detailed in Amnesty International's annual report 2003

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS/UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Continued or possible extrajudicial/unlawful killings were carried out in at least 9 countries: Fiji, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Solomon Islands

"DISAPPEARANCES"

People "disappeared" or remained "disappeared" from previous years in 4 countries: **Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines and Sri Lanka.**

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

Victims of torture and ill-treatment by security forces, police and other state authorities were reported in 20 countries: **Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (North), Korea (South), Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka, Thailand.**

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Confirmed or possible prisoners of conscience were held in 8 countries: **Bhutan, China, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Thailand.**

DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OF TRIAL

People were arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge or trial in 14 countries: **Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Korea (South), Laos, Malaysia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Singapore.**

DEATH PENALTY

People were sentenced to death in 19 countries: **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea (North), Korea (South), Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Viet Nam** and executions were carried out in at least 10: **China, India, Japan, Korea (North), Malaysia, Pakistan, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Viet Nam.**

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Armed opposition groups committed serious human rights violations, such as deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and hostage taking in 8 countries: **Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Papua New Guinea and Philippines.**

EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

Highlights of Amnesty International Report 2003

Covering events from January to December 2002

In Europe and Central Asia, discriminatory practices continued to be prevalent in many countries throughout the region. In some countries, ethnic minorities and foreigners were especially at risk of being tortured or ill-treated by state agents; they were also targets for attacks by non-state actors.

The rights of asylum-seekers came under increased attack and the effects of the attacks of 11 September 2001 continued to be felt throughout Europe and Central Asia, as many countries justified restrictive legislation and other measures, leading to human rights violations, as necessary for national security. Jews and Arabs were the victims of a wave of racist attacks in Western Europe, including **Belgium** and **France**.

Serious human rights abuses continued to be committed in conflict or post-conflict situations, particularly in the **Russian Federation** and in the western **Balkans**.

Amnesty International documented cases of ill-treatment, in some cases amounting to torture, in **Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Kazakstan, Moldova, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Uzbekistan** and the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**. Allegations of ill-treatment, including torture, were also received from **Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Portugal, Romania, Spain** and **Switzerland**. Members of the Roma community and other ethnic minorities, foreigners and citizens of immigrant backgrounds appear to have been targets of these practices throughout Europe.

There were concerns about new legislation that created even more restricted conditions for asylum-seekers in **Austria, Denmark, Hungary, Italy** and the **UK**. People were forcibly returned to countries where it was believed they would be at serious risk of torture and ill-treatment from **Germany, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan** and the **Russian Federation**.

There were continuing reports of police officers subjecting foreign nationals resisting deportation to physical assault and dangerous restraint methods in **Belgium** and **Switzerland**. In **France**, one man died as the authorities used restraint methods while they tried to forcibly deport him to Argentina.

In **Spain**, unaccompanied foreign children, mainly of Moroccan origin, claimed that they were ill-treated and sexually abused in some reception centres in Melilla and the Canary Islands. The continuing arrival of African immigrants on Canary Island shores caused humanitarian concerns. Allegations of torture and ill-treatment by police officers and Civil Guards were frequent and included complaints by immigrants and other people of foreign origin as well as people held incommunicado. The armed Basque group *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) carried out a series of bombings and shootings, some resulting in deaths, including of a small girl.

By the end of 2002, 11 foreign nationals were interned in the **UK** under the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (ATCSA) which allows for indefinite detention without charge or trial on the basis of secret evidence of foreign nationals who cannot be deported. Those interned were either asylum-seekers or recognized refugees. Many of these detainees, or those detained on the basis of extradition warrants, were held in inhuman or degrading conditions in high-security prisons.

Both the **UK** and the **Danish** governments failed to make adequate representations to the US authorities urging respect for the human rights of eight UK and one Danish national, respectively, held in US custody in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

In January 2002, authorities in **Bosnia-Herzegovina** handed over six Algerian men -- who held Bosnian citizenship -- to US custody, without obtaining guarantees that they would not be subjected to the death penalty, torture or ill-treatment. Despite a decision of the Human Rights Chamber stating that four of them should not be forcibly removed from Bosnian territory pending a full examination of their case, the men were reportedly taken to the US detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

International forces in the Balkans failed to respect human rights standards. The NATO-led peace-keeping Kosovo Force (**KFOR**) continued to arrest and illegally detain people. A Bosnian citizen was detained without warrant by the Stabilization Force (**SFOR**) in Bosnia-Herzegovina, reportedly on suspicion of illegal possession of weapons and documents, and of espionage against SFOR. He was detained in a US military base and denied access to a lawyer and family visits. He remained in detention at the end of 2002 although he had been allowed some very restricted contact with his lawyer.

The authorities largely failed to address impunity for war crimes in **Bosnia-Herzegovina**, **Croatia** and the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**. In all three countries the large number of unresolved "disappearances" and abductions remained a pressing concern. Ethnically and politically motivated attacks and severe discrimination against minorities continued in **Bosnia-Herzegovina** and **the FRY (particularly Kosovo)**, undermining the sustainability of the return of a number of refugees and displaced persons to their pre-war homes.

In **Macedonia**, members of armed groups, mostly believed to be connected to remnants of the National Liberation Army, committed repeated abuses throughout the year, including killings.

Both sides to the conflict in the Chechen Republic continued to commit serious human rights abuses. Russian security forces reportedly carried out extrajudicial executions, "disappearances" and torture, including rape. Chechen fighters intensified their activities, including a suicide bomb attack in December. Elsewhere in the **Russian Federation** there were continuing reports of torture and ill-treatment. Prison conditions were often cruel, inhuman and degrading. Members of ethnic minorities faced widespread discrimination and racist attacks were often carried out with impunity. In late October, about 50 people took more than 800 people hostage at a Moscow theatre. In its wake, law enforcement agencies cracked down on Chechen civilians throughout the Russian Federation.

In October, Akhmed Zakayev, an envoy of the Chechen president, was detained while in Copenhagen to attend the World Chechen Congress, following an extradition request from the Russian government. There were concerns that he would be at risk of torture or ill-treatment if handed over to the Russian authorities. In December, the Danish authorities released him, stating that there was insufficient evidence to justify his extradition.

An armed attack on the President of **Turkmenistan** on 25 November, triggered a new wave of repression and clamp-down on dissent. Scores of family members of government critics whom the authorities implicated in the attack on the President faced detention, harassment and eviction from their homes. Those arrested faced torture and ill-treatment and the authorities did not disclose comprehensive information about their whereabouts or the charges against them.

Legal reforms introduced with the aim of meeting European Union accession criteria led to the Parliament in **Turkey** amending its legislation. Reforms included changing detention regulations and amending laws used in the past to curtail freedom of expression. Many prisoners of conscience continued to face trial or imprisonment, particularly for expressing opinions on the Kurdish question or the high-security "F-type" prisons, or for expressing Islamist views. Despite important legal reforms, reports of torture and ill-treatment in police custody remained widespread. In November the Justice and Development Party (AK) was elected to government. The AK party leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, a former prisoner of conscience, was prohibited from standing for parliament because of his previous conviction.

In 2002, the **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia** abolished the death penalty for all crimes, while **Turkey** abolished it for ordinary crimes. In other countries such as **Tajikistan** and **Uzbekistan** the authorities continued to treat the death penalty as a state secret, depriving families of death-row inmates of vital information about their loved ones. Executions were reported in a number of countries, including **Belarus** and **Kazakhstan**.

Freedom of expression continued to suffer as some governments imposed restrictive measures. In **Belarus**, the authorities used criminal libel laws to curb the legitimate exercise of freedom of expression, sentencing three journalists to imprisonment and forced labour. There were reports of journalists being physically attacked by unidentified assailants in **Belarus** and **Ukraine**.

In **Bulgaria**, people with mental disabilities continued to face systematic discrimination, and conditions in many social care homes were inhuman and degrading. In October, Amnesty International and the Bulgarian Helsinki Committee convened an international forum in Sofia to highlight the problem and to urge the authorities to reform the mental health, social care and educational systems.

Court decisions restricted the scope of **Belgian** universal jurisdiction legislation over genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes under which, by the end of 2002, complaints had been lodged against people from some 20 countries, including past and present heads of state and lower-level officials.

Austria's Constitutional Court ruled that the country's unequal age of consent for gay men was unconstitutional.

Human Rights Violations in Europe and Central Asia detailed in Amnesty International's annual report 2003

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS/UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Continued or possible extrajudicial/unlawful killings were carried out in at least 2 countries:
Macedonia and **Russian Federation**.

"DISAPPEARANCES"

People "disappeared" or remained "disappeared" from previous years in 6 countries:
Belarus, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Russian Federation, Ukraine and **Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**.

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

Victims of torture and ill-treatment by security forces, police and other state authorities were reported in 27 countries: **Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece,**

Hungary, Italy, Kazakstan, Macedonia, Moldova, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Confirmed or possible prisoners of conscience were held in 6 countries: **Armenia, Belarus, Finland, Russian Federation, Switzerland and Turkey.**

DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OF TRIAL

People were arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge or trial in 4 countries: **Bosnia-Herzegovina, Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, United Kingdom and Russian Federation.**

DEATH PENALTY

People were sentenced to death in 6 countries: **Armenia, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan**, and executed in 4 countries: **Belarus, Kazakstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.**

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Armed opposition groups committed serious human rights violations, such as deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and hostage taking in 4 countries: **Macedonia, United Kingdom, Russian Federation and Spain.**

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

Highlights of Amnesty International Report 2003

Covering events from January to December 2002

Although events related to Iraq dominated the region, the human rights situation was further aggravated across much of the Middle East and North Africa in the name of "combating terrorism". Clampdowns upon freedom of expression and assembly, and intimidation of human rights defenders proliferated. Impunity for human rights violations continued and victims and their families were largely denied justice. The region continued to suffer from judicial and extra judicial executions, widespread use of torture and unfair trials.

With the international spotlight on **Iraq** a general amnesty for prisoners was announced but the fate of tens of thousands of people who "disappeared" in previous years remained unknown. Scores of people including possible prisoners of conscience were executed. Non-Arabs, mostly Kurds, in the Kirkuk region continued to be forcibly expelled to Iraqi Kurdistan.

The UN Special Rapporteur on Iraq was admitted to the country for the first time since 1992 and in April the UN Commission on Human Rights adopted a resolution accusing the Iraqi government of "all-pervasive repression and oppression sustained by broad-based discrimination and widespread terror".

Civilian deaths resulting from increased air strikes by US and UK forces inside the "air exclusion zones" were reported.

In the **Occupied Territories** the Israeli army committed abuses which constituted war crimes. These included unlawful killings, obstruction of medical assistance and targeting of medical personnel, extensive and wanton destruction of property, torture and cruel and inhuman treatment, unlawful confinement and the use of "human shields". At least 1,000 Palestinians were killed by the Israeli army, most of them unlawfully. They included 150 children and at least 35 individuals killed in targeted assassinations.

Palestinian armed groups killed more than 420 Israelis, at least 265 of them civilians and including 47 children, The deliberate targeting of civilians by Palestinian armed groups constituted crimes against humanity.

Prolonged curfews were imposed by Israel throughout the Occupied Territories and more than 2,000 homes were destroyed by the Israeli army. Thousands of Palestinians were arrested -- most were released without charge, but more than 3,000 remained in military jails.

At least 158 Israeli conscripts and reservists who refused to serve (in the army) for reasons of conscience were imprisoned.

Scores of people were arrested for political reasons by the **Palestinian Authority**. They included members of armed groups and people suspected of "collaborating" with Israeli intelligence services. At least 13 people were sentenced to death, three of whom were executed. The majority of those sentenced to death were alleged "collaborators".

In **Algeria** the number of people killed as a result of the internal conflict remained high. Hundreds of civilians including children, were killed in attacks by armed groups and 10 civilians were killed by security forces. Hundreds of members of the security forces, state-armed militia and armed groups were killed in attacks, ambushes and armed confrontation. Torture continued to be widespread, particularly during secret and unacknowledged detention. The overwhelming problem of impunity for human rights

violations meant that the many thousands of victims of torture, "disappearances" and killings by security forces, armed groups and state-armed militia still waited for justice. The state of emergency imposed in 1992 remained in force.

A continued clampdown on political opposition remained in force throughout **Tunisia** where hundreds of political prisoners, for the most part prisoners of conscience, remained in prison. Repression of human rights defenders continued and the authorities clamped down further on the Internet and information and communication technologies. Torture and ill treatment were reported in prisons, police stations and state security buildings.

In **Iran** scores of students, academics and journalists, along with a number of lawyers, were arrested and faced politically motivated criminal charges based on vague worded defamation or security provisions. Such arrests were part of the clampdown on freedom of expression and association led by judicial officials. Reports of ill treatment and torture continued to be received without any sign of independent investigation. At least 113 individuals were executed, including long-term political prisoners and in particular those connected with illegal parties supporting the Kurdish minority. They included two people reportedly executed by stoning. At least 84 individuals were flogged, many in public.

Approximately 65 political prisoners, including 5 prisoners of conscience detained since 1973, were released in **Libya** but hundreds of others reportedly remained in prison. Families of dozens of prisoners were informed by the authorities that their relatives had died in prison, but were not told the date or cause of death. Two possible prisoners of conscience were sentenced to death and reports of torture continued. Legislation remained in force criminalizing non-violent political activities and providing for unfair trials.

Thousands of suspected supporters of banned Islamist groups remained in detention without charge or trial in **Egypt**. Many of them had been held for years. Others were serving sentences imposed after grossly unfair trials before military courts. Torture and ill-treatment of detainees continued to be systematic. At least 48 people were sentenced to death in Egypt in 2002 and 17 were executed. Trials of prisoners of conscience including human rights defenders and individuals arrested in connection with their alleged sexual orientation and 'contempt of religion' continued throughout the year.

In **Jordan** hundreds, including prisoners of conscience, were arrested following demonstrations, or on suspicion of involvement with Islamist groups and "terrorist" activity. There were reports of torture and other ill-treatment of detainees. Political prisoners were tried before the state security court whose procedures did not meet international fair trial standards. At least 15 people were sentenced to death and 14 executed. Freedom of assembly and expression continued to be eroded.

Dozens of men were detained throughout the year on suspicion of involvement in "terrorist" activities both inside and outside of **Kuwait**. Many of these were detained in the last quarter of the year following attacks on US military personnel stationed in Kuwait. More than 30 political prisoners continued to be held. They were convicted in manifestly unfair trials following the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in 1991. Four men, all migrant workers, were executed and four others sentenced to death. There were reports of torture which did not appear to have been independently investigated.

In **Lebanon** there were reports of deportations, arrests and ill-treatment of refugees and asylum seekers -- Palestinian refugees continued to suffer discrimination. Dozens of people affiliated to Christian and Islamist opposition groups were arrested for political reasons. At least 12 others were held for alleged affiliation to al-Qa'ida or other groups classified as "terrorist". There were reports of torture and at least 10 death sentences were passed but there were no executions.

Over 5,000 Iraqi refugees continued to live in Rafha camp in **Saudi Arabia** as virtual prisoners. Gross human rights violations continued in Saudi Arabia, exacerbated by the government policy of "combating terrorism". Violations were perpetuated by the strictly secretive criminal justice system and the

prohibition of political parties, trade unions and independent human rights organisations. Hundreds of suspected religious activists and critics of the state were arrested and no information was available about their legal status. Torture and ill-treatment remained rife.

In **Yemen** the advances made in legal and institutional safeguards against human rights violations over recent years stalled during 2002 in the continuing repercussions of 11 September 2001. Mass arrests took place with foreign nationals targeted for detention and deportation outside the normal legal framework. Journalists were intimidated to prevent them reporting the arrests and some were themselves detained.

New and broader security provisions also had an impact on human rights in the **United Arab Emirates**, enabling the arbitrary arrest and detention of up to 250 citizens. Most remained in detention at the end of the year. The arrests were carried out in the context of countering "terrorism". Asylum seekers -- many of whom were at risk in their country of origin -- were forcibly returned or expelled on grounds of national security. There were also reports of ill-treatment and death in custody following disturbances in a prison in Dubai in February and July.

The clampdown on political dissent was evident in **Syria** too with scores of people arrested for political reasons. There was an increase in the repression of human rights defenders and lawyers. Hundreds of political prisoners remained in detention without trial or following unfair trials. There were fewer reports of torture but cases from earlier years remain uninvestigated. At least two people died in custody.

Human Rights Violations in the Middle East and North Africa detailed in Amnesty International's annual report 2002

EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS / UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Confirmed or possible extrajudicial executions were carried out in 5 countries: **Iraq, Israel/OT, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, Yemen.**

"DISAPPEARANCES"

People were "disappeared" by state agents, or remained "disappeared" in 6 countries: **Algeria, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco/Western Sahara.**

TORTURE AND ILL-TREATMENT

Victims of torture and ill-treatment by security forces, police and other state authorities were reported in 18 countries: **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel/OT, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco/Western Sahara, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.**

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Confirmed or possible prisoners of conscience were held in 13 countries: **Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel/OT, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco/Western Sahara, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia.**

DETENTION WITHOUT CHARGE OR TRIAL

People were arbitrarily arrested and detained without charge or trial in 12 countries: **Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Israel/OT, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Yemen, United Arab Emirates.**

DEATH PENALTY

People were sentenced to death in 15 countries: **Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Lebanon, Morocco/Western Sahara, Palestinian Authority, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen** and executions were carried out in 10 countries: **Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestinian Authority, Saudi Arabia, Syria, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.**

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Armed opposition groups committed serious human rights violations, such as deliberate and arbitrary killings of civilians, torture and abductions or hostage taking in 5 countries: **Algeria, Iraqi Kurdistan, Israel/OT, Morocco/Western Sahara, Palestinian Authority.**

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