

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 19/05/96

UA 188/96 Fear for safety / Deliberate killings /
Medical neglect

26 July 1996

LIBYA Political prisoners in Abu Salim Prison, Tripoli

Amnesty International remains concerned for the safety of political prisoners in Abu Salim Prison in Tripoli in the aftermath of a mutiny which has left scores dead.

The mutiny, which reportedly began on 5 July 1996 and lasted for a week, is believed to have been sparked by the appalling conditions in the prison. Political prisoners are said to have repeatedly complained to the prison authorities about the lack of medical care, the inadequate hygiene, overcrowded cells and the poor diet. Some prisoners were reported to be suffering from various diseases, including skin diseases, and had not been treated.

A number of guards were allegedly taken as hostages by the prisoners who refused to release them until their demand for an improvement in the prison conditions was met. Special security forces then allegedly stormed the prison and shot deliberately at prisoners and the hostages, which led to scores of deaths.

Amnesty International has written to Colonel Mu'ammr al-Gaddafi urging that a prompt, thorough and impartial investigation be set up to establish the circumstances in which the detainees were killed. No reply has yet been received.

Amnesty International fears that there may be reprisals against political prisoners in Abu Salim Prison as punishment for the mutiny, and the organization is concerned that the prison's alleged regime of medical neglect and other harsh conditions which may amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, may be continuing.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- expressing grave concern at reports that scores of political detainees were unlawfully killed by the security forces at Abu Salim Prison in Tripoli in early July 1996;
- urging that an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the circumstances surrounding their deaths be set up and that the conclusions and methods of such investigation be made public;
- urging that the names of those who were killed be published as soon as possible;
- seeking assurances that political prisoners and detainees in Abu Salim Prison are being treated humanely and that they have access to medical doctors, lawyers and families;
- seeking assurances that conditions of detention in this prison meet internationally agreed minimum standards, including standards for the provision of medical care.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Mu'ammr al-Gaddafi
Leader of the Revolution
Office of the Leader of the Revolution
Tripoli
Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Telegrams: Colonel al-Gaddafi, Tripoli, Libya

Telexes: 70 0901 20162 ALKHASU LY
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) His Excellency
'Umar Mustafa al-Muntasir
Secretary of the People's Committee
of the People's Bureau for Foreign Liaison
and International Cooperation
Tripoli

Great Socialist People's Arab Jamahiriya
Telegrams: Excellency al-Muntasir, Foreign Liaison Bureau, Tripoli, Libya
Salutation: Your Excellency

3) His Excellency
Zanati Mohammad al-Zanati
Secretary of the General People's Congress
Secretariat of the General People's Congress
Tripoli

Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
Telegrams: Excellency al-Zanati, General People's Congress, Tripoli, Libya.
Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Libya accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 September 1996.