

@The 82nd International Labour Conference: Amnesty International's concerns relevant to the Committee on Application of Standards

Introduction

Amnesty International has for many years followed with great interest the discussions in the Committee on Application of Standards at the International Labour Conference (ILC) on governments' effective implementation of International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions. Although the scope of ILO Conventions is much broader than Amnesty International's area of work, there are situations where both organizations have similar concerns.

Amnesty International, a worldwide voluntary movement, works to prevent some of the gravest violations by governments of people's fundamental rights. The main focus of its actions is to work toward the release of all prisoners of conscience - those people who have been detained anywhere for their beliefs or because of their ethnic origin, gender, colour or language who have not used or advocated violence; fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners; the abolition of the death penalty, torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of prisoners; and an end to deliberate and arbitrary killings and "disappearances". The organization also opposes abuses committed by armed opposition groups which are contrary to minimum standards of humanitarian conduct such as hostage-taking, torture and killings of prisoners and other deliberate and arbitrary killings. Amnesty International is independent of any government, political system or religious creed and is concerned solely with the protection of human rights regardless of the ideology of the government or opposition forces or the beliefs of the victims.

Thus, situations where both the ILO and Amnesty International have concerns are likely to involve serious violations of human rights not only in respect of ILO Conventions, but also other international standards such as those set in the United Nations (UN) Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which includes the specific rights that Amnesty International seeks to protect. However,

Amnesty International believes that all human rights and freedoms - civil, cultural, economic, political and social - are indivisible and interdependent and that it is the responsibility of the international community to protect the human rights of all people.

This document has been written in advance of the publication of the 1995 *Report of the Committee of Experts on Conventions and Recommendations*. It includes information on current Amnesty International concerns in Bangladesh, Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Mexico, Myanmar, Pakistan, Romania and Saudi Arabia, which are relevant to past observations made by the Committee of Experts and often to recent discussions in the Committee on the Application of Standards. It describes a number of situations where the governments concerned are clearly failing to implement the provisions of ILO Conventions which they have ratified and which Amnesty International hopes the Committee on the Application of Standards will take up at its meeting in June 1995.

Convention No 29, forced labour, 1932

Myanmar (ratified Convention No 29 in 1955)

In the seventh year of government by the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), there has been no fundamental change in its attitude towards respecting the basic human rights of its citizens. In July 1994, the Burmese Foreign Minister announced to a press conference that the SLORC had accepted an invitation for talks about "*democratic reforms and human rights*" with the U N Secretary-General, but added that he did not believe that Myanmar had a human rights problem. This announcement came only 24 hours after an attack by the *tatmadaw* (Burmese army) on a camp inside Myanmar housing ethnic Mon refugees, in which part of the camp was burnt down and 16 men taken away, eight of whom are still missing.

Although the Mon State is not an area in which there have recently been large counter-insurgency operations, mainly because of SLORC attempts to negotiate a ceasefire agreement, thousands of ethnic people have in the last year fled to Thailand to escape human rights violations occurring in the context of forced unpaid labour on construction of a 100-mile long railway between Ye in the Mon State and Dawei in Tanintharyi Division. This large construction project began in the first week of December 1993 and tens of thousands of villagers living locally have been required to work on it.

Hundreds of thousands of Burmese civilians are being forced to work on infrastructure projects throughout the country, including dams, roads, and airports. Despite statements by senior government officials that such labour is voluntary, and the volunteers are well looked after, unofficial reports confirm that local people have been forced to work on the projects in poor conditions. The labourers often are not told how long they will have to work on the projects. Labourers have to supply their own food and medicines, or buy them at high prices from government shops on site. The military supervising the project set work quotas which have to be completed before labourers can go home.

Amnesty International considers forced portering and labour as arbitrary detention. It is concerned about the Burmese military's seizure of hundreds of civilians as porters in their offensive against the Karen National Union (KNU), Myanmar's largest ethnic minority armed opposition group. In the last week of January 1995, scores of escaped porters had fled across the border to seek refuge in Thailand, many of them in terrible condition as a result of beatings and other ill-treatment by the army.

Amnesty International also fears for the safety of a number of people rounded up by the Myanmar army to serve as porters during the army's continuing offensive in the state against the Mong Tai Army (MTA). On 12 March 1995, the *tatmadaw* entered the Akha village of Ban Gor Tai, and took six men as porters. A further four girls and one man are still missing. The other residents have since fled to the Thai border to escape the Tatmadaw.

On 21 March 1995 the *tatmadaw* rounded up porters from the town of Tachilek. The army ordered the headman of each district of Tachilek to provide eight porters. Porters were taken from the districts of Bong Tun, Ta Law, Wan Kong, Mak Ka Ho Kam and Wan Seng Sai among others. In addition, other residents of Tachilek were picked up at random by the Tatmadaw on the evening of 21 March, also to serve as porters for the army. Up to 500 porters were used by the Tatmadaw in the fighting around Tachilek and another 500 have also been detained to act as porters around Mong Hsat.

For over ten years the army has forced tens of thousands of civilians to carry supplies during counter-insurgency operations against various armed groups. Those who are taken are frequently beaten and kicked if they are too weak to carry their load or attempt to escape. Porters often fall ill with malnutrition or malaria.

Whilst Amnesty International welcomes any steps taken by the government which may lead to the improvement of the human rights situation in Myanmar, it is increasingly

concerned that the SLORC has failed to make any real progress or sincere attempts to address continuing patterns of human rights violations.

Convention No 87, freedom of association, 1948

Convention No 98, collective bargaining, 1949

Colombia (ratified Convention Nos 87 and 98 in 1976)

The situation in Colombia has been examined by the Committee on Application of Standards under Convention No 87 at its last six sessions.

In August 1994 the government of President Ernesto Samper Pizano assumed office. This government has taken an important step forward, in comparison to previous administrations, by acknowledging the scale of the human rights crisis and the extent to which members of the security forces are responsible for human rights violations and by stating that human rights would be a priority issue. However, throughout 1994 and the first half of 1995 extrajudicial executions, "disappearances", torture and death threats carried out by members of the security forces and members of paramilitary forces allied to them have persisted. Non-combatant civilians living in conflict zones have been killed during counter-insurgency operations and members of legal opposition groups, trade unionists, indigenous leaders, civic and popular leaders have been the target of human rights violations.

Despite the government's stated commitment to eradicating paramilitary groups, these groups continue to operate jointly with the armed forces and to commit human rights violations. It has failed to ensure that orders to arrest notorious paramilitary leaders are implemented, a move which would be a sign of the government's political will to eradicate paramilitary forces. Furthermore, the government has launched a new Integrated Rural Security Plan which envisages the creation of *Asociaciones Comunitarias de Vigilancia Rural* (CONVIVIR) - Community Rural Surveillance Associations, which are designed to have a "defensive rather than an offensive role" and will principally assist the armed and security forces in intelligence gathering. Amnesty International is seriously concerned that these vigilante groups could be used by elements within the armed and security forces to develop a new paramilitary apparatus in order to continue illegal counter-insurgency practices including extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

Trade unionists have been amongst those who have been victims of human rights violations carried out not only by the security forces but also by paramilitary organizations allied and

working in collaboration with them. On 30 July 1994 a paramilitary group calling itself *Colombia sin Guerrilla* (COLSINGUE) - Colombia without Guerrillas - in a communiqué to the Medellín media claimed responsibility for the killing of Jairo de León Agudelo, Guillermo Marín and Luis Efrén Correa. In the communiqué the paramilitary group declared war against - "*los miembros, políticos y combatientes, de grupos subversivos del país*" - "the members, politicians and combatants of subversive groups in the country", and went on to declare that just as guerrilla forces did not respect non-combatant opponents, "*tampoco nosotros respetaremos sus cuadros políticos y sindicales*" - "neither will we respect their political and trade union cadres".

Guillermo Marín, leader of the *Federación Unitaria de Trabajadores de Antioquia* (FUTRAN) - United Workers' Federation of Antioquia, was shot dead outside the headquarters of the *Sindicato de Trabajadores del Instituto de Seguros Sociales* - Institute of Social Security Union Workers on the 18 July 1994. Jairo de León Agudelo was stabbed to death by two individuals who witnesses alleged were members of the police intelligence body F2. Luis Efrén Correa, vice-president of a textile company trade union - *Sindicato de Trabajadores Satexco*, Satexco Trade Union, was killed on 23 July 1994 by a hitman in Medellín as he entered the company.

In September 1994, FUTRAN was once again targeted by gunmen thought to be members of paramilitary forces. Five heavily armed men forced their way into the union office and opened fire killing Hugo Zapata, the union's disputes secretary, and seriously injuring Carlos Posada, the union's human rights secretary. The killings followed a few hours after police interviewed the president of FUTRAN, Belisario Restrepo, about the circumstances surrounding the death of Guillermo Marín. On 10 October 1994, Hernando Cuadros, a trade union leader of the Tibú branch of the oilworker's union, *Unión Sindical de Obreros* (USO), was abducted from his home and killed. At the same time, unsuccessful attempts were made to abduct other members of the same union. It is believed that paramilitary groups operating in collaboration with the armed forces in the region carried out the killing.

Trade union leader Rodrigo Rodríguez was abducted on 16 February 1995 from a hotel in Barranquilla, Atlántico department, by armed men who identified themselves as security forces. Witnesses reported that Rodrigo Rodríguez was in the restaurant of the Hotel Diamante in Barranquilla when, at approximately 7.45pm, a group of armed men entered the hotel. They identified themselves to the hotel's manager as members of the security forces. They forcibly took Rodrigo Rodríguez out of the restaurant. No warrant for his arrest was presented and his whereabouts remain unknown. Rodrigo Rodríguez is one of the leaders of the olive-oil producers' union SINTRAPROACEITE, based in El Copey, Cesar department.

Failure by the present government to take immediate action to eradicate paramilitary forces and bring those responsible for human rights violations to justice will mean that trade unionists and other popular activists will continue to be at risk in Colombia.

Indonesia (ratified Convention No 98 in 1957)

The Committee on Application of Standards discussed Indonesia at its last session.

There is only one officially recognized trade union in Indonesia, the All Indonesia Workers Federation, *Serikat Pekerja Seluruh Indonesia*, (SPSI), which is defined under Ministry of Manpower Regulation No.1/1994 as the sole recognized trade union. The independent Indonesian Prosperous Workers Union (*Serikat Buruh Sejahtera Indonesia - SBSI*) continues to be denied official recognition, and several of its leaders were jailed during 1994.

Nine civilians were sentenced to terms of up to 17 years in prison for the May 1993 abduction and murder of labour activist Marsinah, and a military officer received a nine-month sentence for failing to report the crime to his superiors. However, serious irregularities in the civilian trials, including the use of torture to extract confessions, gave rise to doubts about their fairness, and the military authorities believed to be responsible for the murder were not punished. In December 1994, after the East Java High Court overturned the guilty verdict against the main suspect the Indonesian National Commission on Human rights called for the police to reopen the investigation into Marsinah's murder.

Trials of eleven trade unionists charged with "incitement" to disobey government orders following labour demonstrations which turned violent in Medan, North Sumatra, in April 1994, began in August 1994. The prosecution alleged that the defendants had taken part in trade union activities, such as setting up local branches of the SBSI and holding meetings with workers to discuss labour conditions and wages and to plan strikes. Amnesty International believes that these trials fell short of international standards of fairness and that those who remain in detention may be prisoners of conscience detained solely for their peaceful activities to promote labour rights. In January 1995 the High Court in Medan increased the jail sentences of two of the defendants, Muchtar Pakpahan and Amosi Telaumbanua, from three to four years and from fifteen months to three years, respectively.

Convention No 107 on indigenous and tribal populations, 1957

Convention No 169 on indigenous and tribal populations, 1989

Brazil (ratified Convention No 107 in 1965)

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of human rights violations against indigenous people in Brazil in the context of disputes over land rights. Macuxi indians seeking demarcation of their lands in Roraima state, have been the repeated target of raids on their communities and ill-treatment by members of the state military police. On 7 January 1995, 50 members of the Roraima state military police and seven members of the army are reported to have expelled some 400 members of the Macuxi indigenous community of Caraparu II- including women children and elders- from their Tamandua livestock-holding area (*retiro Tamadua*). Nine Macuxi Indians were reportedly beaten with rifle butts and kicked. Two members of the community, Adão Soares and João André sustained injuries and were detained in handcuffs for several hours. Three houses, a cattle coral and a livestock pen were destroyed. The livestock area is some 500 metres from the site of exploratory works for a proposed hydroelectric dam on the Coting River.

On 14 January some 170 Macuxi indians returned to the livestock area and began working on the land. Twelve members of the military police reportedly arrived and began to cut down hammocks and destroy food and cooking pots the Indians had brought with them. When the Indians tried to prevent them doing so, military police allegedly beat 14 of them and fired several rounds of ammunition at their belongings.

The military police have now constructed a blockade preventing the Macuxi from returning to their livestock area. On 18 January four Federal Police officers and two members of the Government's Indian Agency FUNAI (Fundação Nacional do Indio) accompanied three Macuxi leaders to negotiate with the Commander of Military Police. They were refused access to the livestock holding, and allegedly told that the military police would "use their last bullet" against any attempts by the Indians to return to the area.

In April further denunciations were made about alleged violence by the army against members of the Macuxi, Ingarico, Wapixana and Taurepang communities in the Raposa/Serra do Sol area. The denunciations were made by the Indigenous Council of Roraima, *Conselho Indigena de Roraima*, CIR, to the Minority Groups' Commission of the Federal Chamber of Deputies, *Comissão de Minorias da Camara dos Deputados*. According to CIR, since February the army has effectively rested control of the area from the Federal Police due to increasing clashes between the indigenous people and white settlers. CIR alleges that the army has taken the side of the settlers over disputed land which the indigenous people claim is constitutionally theirs.

Mexico (ratified Convention No 169 in 1990)

Amnesty International has monitored the human rights situation in Mexico for more than two decades and is greatly concerned about a longstanding and continuing pattern of serious human rights violations affecting large sectors of the population. The underprivileged, particularly indigenous peasants, are the most frequent victims of such violations.

Amnesty International has repeatedly noted that torture and ill-treatment are still widely and sometimes systematically used to obtain confessions from detainees. Such confessions obtained by illegal means are frequently used as key and sometimes the sole evidence leading to conviction of the accused. This situation is aggravated when the accused are poor, particularly indigenous people, and have limited access to private legal assistance. Although the law provides for the appointment of a defence lawyer, the number of such lawyers is limited and they are often not able to deliver an adequate defence. Amnesty International is also seriously concerned about the large number of indigenous people crowded in prisons in poor conditions which it considers amounts to ill-treatment. Many have been tried and sentenced on the basis of confessions obtained under torture or following other serious irregularities in the proceedings, including the lack of access to interpreters of non-Spanish speaking defendants. Some indigenous people are serving sentences of several years after convictions based on forced confessions.

Furthermore, Amnesty International is also seriously concerned about continuing reports of harassment and attacks against members of indigenous communities and Indian rights' activists, in Chiapas and elsewhere. For example, on 11 November 1993 the municipal police of Wachochi, in the state of Chihuahua, arbitrarily detained five peasants, including three Rarámuris (Tarahumara Indians), during an indigenous ceremony in the community of Caborachi. The peasants were reportedly detained for protesting about the violent and arbitrary behaviour of the officials, who beat some members of the community and destroyed their belongings. Those detained were brutally beaten by the police, tied up with ropes and taken by truck to the local police station. They were denied access to lawyers, interpreters and even the local attorney. They remained in prison for three days without medical care, before being released without charge. There has been no investigation to establish responsibility for this incident and to bring those responsible to justice.

On 25 December 1993, Edwin Bustillos, an activist for Indian rights who had filed complaints about the incident described above was abducted for a short time by five armed men dressed in civilian clothes, two of whom were reportedly police officers from Wachochi. He was questioned about his activities, threatened with death and brutally beaten, as a result of which he suffered fractures to the skull and ribs. To Amnesty International's knowledge, those responsible have not been brought to justice.

Amnesty International was seriously alarmed about the reported arbitrary arrest, torture and extrajudicial execution by government officials of Rolando Hernández Hernández and Atanacio

Hernández Hernández, respectively leaders of the Nahua and Otomí Indian peasant community of Plan del Encinal, in Ixhuatlán de Madero, Veracruz. They belonged to the *Organización de Pueblos Etnicos José María Morelos y Pavón* (OPEMORELOS) an Indian peasants' rights movement. Their community was raided at 7am on 8 September 1994 by scores of members of *Seguridad Pública*, state police, and dozens of unidentified armed men who forcibly evicted the Indian community. During the raid Rolando and Atanacio were reportedly wounded by the police, arrested and transferred to a nearby ranch. They were never seen alive again. Their mutilated bodies were discovered on 17 September in a nearby river. According to reports, the bodies presented injuries which included short-range gunshot wounds to the head and chest. Other members of the community were forced to flee their homes which remained surrounded by members of the security forces for several days.

Amnesty International believes that these problems have serious consequences for the protection of human rights in Mexico. The government should give them its urgent attention, and ensure that those allegedly responsible for human rights violations are brought to justice.

Convention No 111 on discrimination (employment and occupation), 1958

Bangladesh (ratified Convention No 111 in 1972)

Fundamental rights of women, including the right to life and security of the person, equality before the law, freedom of expression, association and religion, have over the last three years been repeatedly threatened by the failure of the Government of Bangladesh to protect people from actions by Muslim clerics and Islamist groups in Bangladesh. All of these rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of Bangladesh.

Imans (prayer leaders) of mosques and teachers in religious schools, acting alone or as part of village arbitration councils (*Salish*), have sentenced women to be publicly flogged or stoned to death for having violated what they understand as norms of Islamic law. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that seek to train women to become economically self-supporting have been targeted by Islamist groups who regard such organizations as encouraging women to deviate from an Islamic life-style. Several health centres and schools run by NGOs have been damaged or destroyed, and people associated with them have been attacked. Writers and journalists reporting on such issues have received death threats or have been physically attacked by Islamists; newspaper offices have been ransacked and newspapers burned. During mass demonstrations in June and July 1994, which initially agitated for the hanging of feminist writer Taslima Nasrin, Islamist groups expanded their demands to include the execution of all "infidel" and "apostate" writers and journalists, the

banning of "un-Islamic" NGOs and publications as well as the introduction of a blasphemy law carrying the death penalty and declaring the Ahmadiyya a non-Muslim community.

The government, by not condemning, investigating or bringing to justice those suspected of such attacks against women, appears to condone them. In addition, in an apparent attempt to placate Islamist groups, the government has brought charges against several journalists who had been denounced by Islamists, alleging that they had "maliciously and deliberately hurt the religious sentiments of the people".

The village *salish* is an institution which goes back to traditional forms of dispute resolution through mediation. It has no legal standing but persists as a body resembling a council of elders seeking compromise solutions over disputes. There are no uniform terms of reference for the *salish* and there is no legislation governing it. Over the last three years, *salish* have without legal authority tried, convicted and sentenced several people to public flogging or to death. Some of these sentences have been carried out.

The defendants before the *salish* have almost always been women. Human rights groups and women activists have pointed out that women who do not fully conform to socially accepted norms of behaviour are most likely to be tried and sentenced by them. Several young women have been sentenced to public lashings and other cruel, inhuman and degrading forms of punishment, and at least two women are known to have died as a consequence of the treatment they were subjected to following a *salish* judgement.

Nurjahan, a 21 year-old woman of Chatakchara village in Sylhet district was sentenced by a village *salish* in January 1993 to be publicly stoned 101 times. She reportedly died a few hours after she was partially buried in the ground and pelted with stones by villagers. In another case documented by Amnesty International, on 5 May 1993 a young woman named Nurjahan from Dokhin Sripur in Faridpur district, was burned at the stake after a *salish* had found her guilty of adultery.

On 11 May 1994 a *salish* presided over by Maulana Fazlul Fazul Haq sentenced a 13 year-old girl, Sapnaha, to public whipping after she had been raped by a villager, Shafiq, in Dhamsa village, Kasba thana, Brahmanbaria district in August or September 1993 and had become pregnant. The alleged rapist was acquitted by the *salish*, as the four adult male witnesses of good repute required under Islamic law to establish rape were not available, and Sapnaha was pronounced guilty of illicit sexual intercourse for which her pregnancy was

sufficient proof and she was sentenced to be publicly flogged 40 days after delivery. However, a group of women activists gave her protection.

On 4 August 1994 Rezia Khatun, a 22-year old woman in Bara Chaimati village in Kishoreganji district, was made to drink her own urine after being found guilty of adultery by a salish. On 8 October 1994, a 13-year old girl, Julekha, was reportedly publicly flogged 101 times by the local cleric in a village in Satkhira district after he found her guilty of an extra-marital relationship. She was taken unconscious to the hospital in Satkhira.

Pakistan (ratified Convention No 111 in 1961)

Amnesty International is concerned about the killings of members of religious and ethnic minorities in all parts of the country, especially at the rise in numbers in Sindh. The authorities have done little to bring those responsible to justice and thereby appear to condone people taking the law into their own hands.

Announcements by the government in 1994 that procedural changes would be introduced to prevent abuse of the blasphemy laws, which imposes a mandatory death penalty for anyone who "defiles the name of the Holy Prophet", have not been implemented. The blasphemy law continues to be abused, particularly against members of the Ahmadiyya community. According to Amnesty International's information at least 120 Ahmadis currently have blasphemy charges pending against them.

On 9 April 1995, two Ahmadis, Dr Rashid Ahmad and his son-in law, Riaz Khan, were attacked as they were about to attend a court hearing in Shab Quada in the North West Frontier Province. Riaz Khan was stoned to death and his dead body was stripped and dragged through the town on a rope. Dr Rashid was taken to a hospital in Peshawar with serious injuries. A third Ahmadi, Advocate Bashir Ahmad, escaped unhurt. The three men had gone to Shab Quadar in order to file a bail application on behalf of another Ahmadi, Daulat Khan, who had been harassed following his conversion to the sect several months before, and had been arrested for "his own safety". When they entered the court premises, a violent mob attacked them with sticks and stones. To Amnesty International's knowledge, no one has been criminally charged for the killing and Daulat Khan is still in custody.

In November 1994 and January 1995 death sentences imposed for blasphemy were overturned by the Lahore High Court, leading to the defendants' acquittal. However, in February two Christians, including a 14-year-old boy, were sentenced to death. They were

finally acquitted in March but during the appeal hearing, lawyers, human rights activists and relatives of the accused received death threats by Islamists. Responding to national and international protests, the government once again promised to introduce procedures that would stop the abuse of the blasphemy law, but as yet has taken no action to implement this commitment.

Romania (ratified Convention No 111 in 1973)

Romania's implementation of Convention No 111 was discussed at the last session of the Committee on Application of Standards. The government was again urged to take all necessary additional action to implement measures requested by the 1991 ILO Commission of Inquiry.

Amnesty International continues to be concerned about the pattern of inadequate protection by law enforcement officers of the Roma community in Romania from racist violence. For example, in Bâcu, Joi_a commune, on 8 January 1995 the police were called following a fight in the early hours between several Roma youths and two other villagers and the shooting of two Roma. When they arrived they found many Roma had already fled the village fearing an outbreak of violence by other villagers. Despite police guards on several houses, a group of villagers set fire to several Roma houses and destroyed a fourth one which was under construction. None of the Roma whose houses were destroyed were implicated in the incident of the previous night. The Roma returned to their homes four or five days later after they were convinced that a gendarmerie unit would remain in the village to guard them. The Giurgiu county prosecutor is reportedly investigating the incident in which the two Roma were shot, while the police are conducting an investigation into the arson and destruction of Roma property. However, no one has yet been charged with any offence.

Amnesty International is concerned that law enforcement authorities, although in a position to identify instigators and prevent incidents of anti-Roma violence did not take adequate measures to prevent actions which resulted in placing at risk human lives and in arson and destruction of property. Law enforcement officers, a police chief and around 20 officers who witnessed a group of villagers gathering at around 7pm on the day of the incident, apparently in preparation for violence, took no steps to prevent their actions. All acts of inciting violence are prohibited under Chapter IC of the Romanian Penal Code

A series of racist attacks against Roma in Giurgiu province in 1991 have still not been fully and impartially investigated. The pattern of inadequate police protection and apparently

discriminatory treatment of Roma by judicial authorities investigating ill-treatment of Roma by law enforcement officers or perpetrators of anti-Roma violence has occurred throughout Romania. In November 1994 the General Prosecutor informed Amnesty International that a decision by the Military Prosecutor not to indict soldiers involved in an attack on Roma in Bucharest in July 1992 was considered legally justified.

Saudi Arabia (ratified Convention No 111 in 1973)

Saudi Arabia's implementation of Convention No 111 was discussed in the 1993 session of the Committee on Application of Standards. The Government stated that under the country's implementation of Islamic law (Shari'a), full equality of treatment and opportunity was respected.

Amnesty International remains concerned about the pattern of discrimination against religious minorities, especially against Christians and Shi'a Muslims, which it brought to the Committee's attention at its last session.

Saudi Arabia does not have a written penal code or constitution and has not ratified or acceded to international human rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Private and public, non-Islamic worship is banned in Saudi Arabia. As a result, Christians and followers of other non-Islamic beliefs have been arrested, detained and tortured or ill-treated. These include Catholics and Protestants held in section eight of Priman Prison in Jeddah who were reportedly subjected to beatings on 13 July 1994 for refusing to perform Islamic prayers. They included an 89-year-old Somali national and three Eritrean nationals.

Shi'a Muslims have also been the subject of direct discrimination, and a great number have been arrested, detained and tortured in recent years for opposing such discrimination. In September 1992, Sadiq 'Abdul-Karim Malallah, a Saudi Arabian Shi'a Muslim aged 17 at the time of his arrest in April 1988, was publicly beheaded in al-Qatif after being convicted of apostasy and blasphemy. During his first months in detention he was held in solitary confinement for prolonged periods and reportedly tortured. During his trial he was allowed no legal representation. Amnesty International considered Sadiq Malallah as a prisoner of conscience and believes that he was executed for his involvement in peaceful efforts to secure improved rights for Saudi Arabia's Shi'a Muslim minority.

Amnesty International has not received a response from the government to its appeals concerning the continuing pattern of discrimination towards religious minorities in Saudi Arabia.