

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on 229/92 (ASA 16/08/02, 9 July 1992) - Death in Custody/Fear of Torture

**MYANMAR (BURMA): Mohamed Ilyas
Fazal Ahmed**

Amnesty International has obtained further information about the arrest and death of Mohamed Ilyas, who was reportedly beaten to death by Military Intelligence Services (MIS) personnel in Buthidaung township, Rakhine (Arakan) State, and died in hospital on 23 June. The MIS and other Myanmar security agencies reportedly often beat and otherwise ill-treat political prisoners under interrogation.

Mohamed Ilyas was arrested at his home on 13 June, not 16 June as earlier reported. The original reason given for his arrest by the authorities was his possible involvement in a bomb explosion near Maungdaw town. He was reportedly held in incommunicado detention and severely beaten, and on 19 June he was taken to hospital, where he later died.

On 24 July the Bangkok Post published a letter from the Myanmar Embassy in Thailand which denied that Mohamed Ilyas had been beaten to death in custody, and claimed that he died of "acute gastro-intestinal disease". However unofficial sources state that he was in good health at the time of his arrest.

In the same letter, the Embassy asserted that Fazal Ahmed, who they stated is also under investigation for involvement in the explosion, was "in good health and not 'seriously injured'...[and] has never been ill-treated or tortured while in custody." However Amnesty International remains concerned about the health of Fazal Ahmed and the circumstances of Mohamed Ilyas' death, particularly in light of gross human rights abuses committed by the State Law and Order Restoration Council against Muslims in the Rakhine State.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Over 260,000 Burmese Muslims have escaped from the Rakhine State and taken refuge in neighbouring Bangladesh. They have fled from persistent gross human rights violations committed by the Myanmar military, including torture, ill-treatment, arrests on political and religious grounds and extrajudicial executions.

Reports of human rights abuses against Muslims in the Rakhine State by Myanmar security forces rose sharply in early 1991, and they began to leave Myanmar in the thousands to seek asylum in neighbouring Bangladesh. These numbers increased dramatically in late 1991 and early 1992.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes and airmail letters

- expressing continued concern about the reported death in military custody of Mohamed Ilyas

- urging that an immediate full and impartial investigation be held into the death in custody of Mohamed Ilyas, that the results be made public and that, if indeed he died from beatings, those responsible be brought to justice and compensation be granted to his relatives;

Page 2 of FU 229/92

- seeking assurances that Fazal Ahmed, who is in military custody in Rakhine (Arakan) State, will not be ill-treated in any way.

- seeking assurances for the safety of Mohamed Ilyas' family.

APPEALS TO:

1) General Than Shwe
Chairman
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar
Telegrams: General Than Shwe, Yangon, Myanmar
Telexes: 21393 MOFARN BM

Salutation: Dear General

2) Major General Khin Nyunt
Secretary 1
State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon, Union of Myanmar
Telegrams: Major General Khin Nyunt, Yangon, Myanmar

Salutation: Dear Major General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Major General Mya Thin
Chairman of Rakhine State Law and Order Restoration Council
c/o Ministry of Defence
Signal Pagoda Road
Yangon
Union of Myanmar

and to diplomatic representatives of Myanmar accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 September 1992.