LIBYA

Moves to abolish the death penalty

A human rights document which restricts the scope of the death penalty and aims for its total abolition was adopted by the General People’s Congress (GPC) on 12 June.

In a speech to the Congress, Colonel Mu’ammar Gaddafi expressed deep regret that the death penalty had not so far been abolished by the GPC but welcomed its restriction. He pledged to continue to struggle for its total abolition in Libya and throughout the world. On 13 June he intervened to commute all existing death sentences in Libya. The document, entitled the Great Green Document on Human Rights in the Era of the Masses, also outlaws degrading punishments and ill-treatment of prisoners, and proclaims the right to a fair trial.

An AI delegation visited Libya from 6 to 14 June to learn about and discuss recent human rights developments in the country. The delegates—Dr Ezzat Abdel Fattah, professor of criminology, and two staff members of the organization’s International Secretariat—met political, judicial and security officials and observed the two-day extraordinary session of the GPC in al-Bayda which adopted the human rights document.

AI delegates addressed the GPC. They supported Colonel Gaddafi’s call for abolition and welcomed the release of prisoners in March, some of whom had been prisoners of conscience.

SOUTH KOREA

Releases

Two prisoners of conscience have been released from preventive custody. Both were held for several years after completing their original sentences.

Soh Joon-shik was freed on 25 May after 17 years in prison, 10 of them in preventive detention. Kang Jong-kon was released on 10 June after over 12 years’ imprisonment, seven of them in preventive detention.

Both were held in preventive detention under the Public Security Law. The authorities claimed this was to prevent them from committing the same offence again, and because they refused to sign statements of conversion to anti-communism.

After his release, Soh Joon-shik said: “I refused to recant in order to remain obedient to my conscience. The Public Security Law is...a blatant oppression of human conscience.”

Soh Joon-shik and Kang Jong-kon are still subject to restrictions on their residence and activities. AI is urging the authorities to lift all limitations against them.

Napoleon Ortigoza (above, with his grandchildren) was AI’s longest serving prisoner of conscience in Latin America. He was released in December after 25 years’ imprisonment in Paraguay. The authorities persistently refused to issue a safe-conduct for him to leave the country. However, he finally left Paraguay on 15 June under the auspices of the Colombian ambassador, in whose residence he had taken refuge last March.

On 17 June Napoleon Ortigoza travelled from Buenos Aires to Spain where he and his family have been granted asylum.
SRI LANKA

Political killings and 'disappearances'

Nearly a year after the signing of the Indo-Sri Lankan peace accord, human rights abuses continue to be reported in Sri Lanka. They include 'disappearances' of dozens of Sinhalese in the south of the country.

These violations are of particular concern in view of the Sri Lankan Government's decision to rescind its assurance that AI could visit the country in April.

President Jayewardene gave the assurance during a British Broadcasting Corporation radio interview in February.

There have been reports that members of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF), stationed in northern and eastern Sri Lanka, have been responsible for rape and other acts of brutality, as well as the killing of unarmed civilians in reprisal.

Also since July, hundreds of Sinhalese women and men—most allegedly members of the banned People's Liberation Front (JVP) —have been arrested and detained without charge or trial. They are suspected of acts of violence including killing of government officials.

AI believes the country's security forces were responsible for the 'disappearances' of 685 Tamils between 1983 and July 1987. The organization has the names of all 685 "disappeared", none of whom has been accounted for.

These events took place in the context of armed conflict in northern and eastern Sri Lanka when violence between armed Tamil groups—fighting for a separate Tamil state—and the Sri Lankan security forces increased.

There is evidence that many of the "disappeared" were tortured while held incommunicado and that others had been shot after arrest and their bodies disposed of in secret.

The continued use of prolonged incommunicado detention and the inadequate inquest procedures used under emergency regulations can only encourage further torture, extrajudicial killings, and "disappearances".

Although allegations of "disappearances" have continued on a lesser scale since July, "disappearances" now include not just members of the minority Tamil community, but also members of the Sinhalese majority.

Some Tamils have also "disappeared" in the north after having been arrested by the IPKF. AI has also raised reports of abuses by the IPKF with the Indian authorities.

Many of the thousands of prisoners released in an amnesty after the signing of the accord have made sworn statements that they were tortured by the security forces. Some of them witnessed deaths as a result of torture.

Nearly 650 Tamils remain in detention without trial under the prevention of Terrorism Act and Emergency Regulations despite provisions for their release as part of the July amnesty.

AI has urged the Sri Lankan Government to take immediate action to remedy past human rights abuses and to address the latest developments.

Among its recommendations are the establishment of impartial and independent investigations to determine the fate of the "disappeared" and to investigate complaints of reprisal killings by the Sri Lankan security forces as well as the Indian Peace Keeping Force.

PERU

Armed forces accused of killing villagers

At least 28 people, including children, were killed in the village of Cayara, Ayacucho department, during an armed forces counter-insurgency operation on 14 May.

The victims included several schoolboys, their headmaster, and local councillors. According to eyewitnesses, five of the victims had been arrested and taken by the military to the local church where they were beaten and hacked to death with clubs and machetes. Others were killed as they returned home from tending crops in nearby fields.

The military operation occurred the day after an ambush of a military convoy in nearby Erusco by the Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) guerrilla group, in which an army captain and three soldiers died and 15 were wounded.

Initially, army officials obstructed attempts by the Attorney General's representatives to enter the area to investigate the incident: Dr Carlos Escobar Pineda, head of the special commission of attorneys (appointed to investigate human rights abuses), was prevented from reaching Cayara for over a week after the killings. Access to the area was also denied to journalists during this period.

Finally, on 27 May, Dr Escobar, accompanied by forensic experts, members of the judiciary and a group of parliamentarians, arrived at Cayara to inspect six graves where, according to the head of the Political-Military Command of Ayacucho, 18 of the victims had been buried. They found the bodies had been removed. Dr Escobar said that evidence, including eye-witness testimony, indicates that the bodies were removed by the military on the night of 23 May. He also said his delegation had found bloodstained fragments of skulls in the empty graves and pieces of skin and hair caught on nearby bushes.

The Peruvian military have denied charges that troops killed innocent villagers from Cayara in reprisal for the guerrilla ambush. They claimed that an unspecified number of "terrorists" died in skirmishes with the troops and that the bodies were taken from the graves by Sendero Luminoso. Dr Escobar, however, has cited the testimonies of over 20 survivors in which they deny that any confrontation occurred on 14 May or that the victims were armed.

AI has called on the Peruvian Government to ensure a full and impartial inquiry is carried out into the alleged massacre in Cayara, and that those found responsible be brought to justice.

SOMALIA

Civilians deliberately killed

AI has appealed to Somali President Mohamed Siad Barre for an independent and impartial investigation into reports that civilians in Hargeisa have been deliberately killed by the security forces.

The killings occurred after a new wave of fighting began between government forces and the opposition Somali National Movement (SNM) in northern Somalia in late May.

The fighting has resulted in heavy casualties of both civilians and combatants. AI has urged the government to stop the deliberate killing of civilians.

The victims include people suspected of having links with the SNM and apprehended by military or security officers. According to reports, 21 youths aged between 14 and 20 were shot dead in the centre of Hargeisa in three separate summary executions on 31 May and 1 June. Their bodies were left in the street for two days.

There have also been reports of a large number of other people being shot dead by the security forces during house-to-house searches for opponents.

In addition, AI has received reports of many arrests in Mogadishu of people suspected of having links with the SNM. In view of numerous previous reports of torture of political prisoners by the National Security Service, it has urged the President to take steps to protect these prisoners from torture.

This man claims that scars on his torso and limbs were caused when members of the security forces dripped melted foam rubber on his body.

Prisoner news

AI learned in June 1988 of the release of 202 prisoners under adoption or investigation. AI took up 125 cases.

Among its recommendations are the establishment of impartial and independent investigations to determine the fate of the "disappeared" and to investigate complaints of reprisal killings by the Sri Lankan security forces as well as the Indian Peace Keeping Force.
Fifty years ago the United Nations proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For the first time in history governments internationally pledged themselves to respect the fundamental rights of all their citizens.

Today more than half the member states of the United Nations are holding their own citizens in jail in violation of the Declaration. Torture, “disappearances” and executions are widespread.

During 1988 Amnesty International is organizing a worldwide campaign to promote awareness of and respect for the Universal Declaration. The ‘Human Rights Now!’ campaign has five aims:

- To show that people everywhere support human rights. This is being done through a worldwide appeal accompanied by the Declaration text which is being translated into dozens of languages for worldwide circulation.
- To protect people in all countries who are working for human rights.
- To get governments to commit themselves unambiguously to be legally bound to respect human rights.
- To make protection of human rights an important goal in governments’ international relations.
- To make awareness of human rights an important goal in governments’ international relations.

Even within the strictly defined framework of AI’s mandate, 1988 has not so far proved to have been a good year for human rights.

Eighty-five governments have in detention people that AI is investigating or seeking to free as prisoners of conscience. The organization is working on behalf of 3,352 prisoner cases in the 85 countries, of which 487 have been taken up since January.

But in the first four months of the year, there was some good news as well. Over 600 of the 98 major documents on human rights violations in 46 countries from January to April. The reports covered issues ranging from executions in China, South Africa, Nigeria and the USA; to torture in Panama, Peru and Iran, through to police interrogation procedures in the United Kingdom.

The facts make a mockery of official promises about human rights. Behind each statistic is a tale of human anguish and cruelty. All of it is appalling and unjust. Most of it breaks international law.

AI sent 18 missions to 15 countries in the first four months of the year. Delegates observed political trials, carried out on-the-spot investigations and made representations to government officials.

None of these reports or initiatives should have been necessary. In the 40th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights such abuses should have become only a ghost from the past.

The Declaration applies to everyone and should be known by everyone. Ignorance of the rights it proclaims can only contribute to their continuing violation. Awareness of human rights is the first step towards their protection.
Forty years on . . .

Only a piece of paper? The late Eleanor Roosevelt, who was the chairperson of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights when it prepared its draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, called it the Magna Carta of Mankind. Alexander Solzhenitsyn has called it the greatest achievement of the United Nations.

On the night of 10 December 1948, in Paris, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted, for the first time in history, an international declaration proclaiming the existence of certain rights and freedoms. The Assembly was reacting, in the name of the peoples of the world, not only to the gross violations of the most basic rights during and immediately before one of the worst wars in history, but also to widespread poverty, discrimination and other kinds of injustice. One of the reasons for the historic importance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is indeed its recognition of the existence of economic, social and cultural rights.

Human rights are at the very heart of the ideological struggle which then divided and still divides the world. The adoption of the Declaration without dissenting vote was therefore a great achievement—something indeed in the nature of a miracle. One wonders whether it could be done now. The impelling factor was of course the catalyst of the war that had just produced the United Nations Charter.

As things were to turn out, the achievement was greater than anyone would have dared believe in 1948. The Declaration was adopted in the form of a resolution of the General Assembly as part of an International Bill of Rights that was also to include two international conventions now known as the Covenants.

The General Assembly is not, however, a world parliament; and, except in housekeeping matters like the appointment of the Secretary-General, its decisions are not binding in international law.

But the Declaration has been invoked as law so many times in the 40 years since its adoption that it is now part of the customary law of nations and is therefore binding on all states, including those states such as China, South Africa and the United States that have not ratified the two human rights Covenants. Well may Alexander Solzhenitsyn have said that the adoption of the Declaration was the greatest achievement of the United Nations!

The Declaration has also had a strong impact on national law all over the world. Not only are the principles enunciated by it reflected in national legislation, sometimes verbatim, but they have also influenced the jurisprudence of national courts. And the Declaration has inspired regional international human rights systems including the European Convention on the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms and the Inter-American and African conventions on human rights.

Even more important perhaps, having regard to the
close relationship between respect for human rights and the peace of nations, the adoption of the Declaration and its subsequent recognition as part of the customary law of nations has played a major role in bringing about a radical change in the very structure of international law. This is no longer a law that governs simply the relations of states, but one which now reaches down to other entities including individual men and women.

That radical change in the nature of international law—which should now be called world law—is perhaps the most hopeful development at a time when the world is threatened with nuclear destruction.

Individual men, women and children now have rights under international law. They also have duties. The developing international law of human rights strengthens the status of the individual while weakening that of the state. It can also create responsibilities for individuals under international law. In time perhaps—if there is time—we may reach a point in a new world order where it will no longer be possible for individuals guilty of international crimes to hide behind the collective responsibility of their states when international law will punish the real criminals and not innocent people.

These are some of the pluses. The question remains: how does all this work in practice? The answer is not as well as it should do. This is because there are few, if any, executive bodies at the international level capable of enforcing the law.

The separate states, which still boast about their sovereignty, still possess a monopoly over the means of coercion; and probably will continue to do so as long as individual criminals go free in a world that punishes collectivities, including innocent women and children, for crimes committed by individuals.

Until that is changed, there will be little effective implementation of human rights norms at the world level. In the meantime, the most effective sanction of world human rights law will remain the force of public opinion, something to which all governments, even authoritarian governments, are sensitive.

Campaigning for human rights

AI members around the world have been winning support for the Human Rights Now! campaign since its launch in early March.

In the drive to gather signatures for the appeal, which calls on every government to respect the Declaration’s promise that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, several sections invited prominent people to attend public signings. An enormous petition form was unrolled in one of the main streets in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, and several leading citizens signed the appeal.

The Japanese Section has enlisted the aid of the Japanese telecommunications workers’ union, Zen densatsu, in a special drive to collect signatures; the Swedish Section is approaching 20 of the largest companies in Sweden to organize petition signing. The Faroe Islands Section had appeals published free of charge in several newspapers.

In the Sudan, AI groups organized an evening of poetry with poets and a former prisoner of conscience. A “youth newspaper” was produced by the Danish Section and distributed to hundreds of high schools. AI groups in Mauritius held a forum to discuss human rights.

Special efforts are being made to reach the young: sections are also producing material for students, organizing forums for schoolchildren and visiting schools and universities to talk about human rights.

Thousands of people will be reached as a result of the Human Rights Now! concert tour that is expected to visit some 20 locations promoting awareness of and support for human rights.

Eleanor Roosevelt holds the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. She was the chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights, which drafted the Declaration. She described the Declaration as the “Magna Carta of Mankind”.

The Senegalese Communications Minister Robert Sagna signs the “Human Rights Now” appeal.
**CAMPAIGN FOR PRISONERS OF THE MONTH**

Each of the people whose story is told below is a prisoner of conscience. Each has been arrested because of his or her religious or political beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin or language. None has used or advocated violence. Their continuing detention is a violation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. International appeals can help to secure the release of these prisoners or to improve their detention conditions. In the interest of the prisoners, letters to the authorities should be worded carefully and courteously. You should stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. In no circumstances should communications be sent to the prisoner.

---

**KENYA**

Julius Mwandawiro Mghanga: a secondary school headmaster, he is serving a five-year prison sentence for possessing seditious literature.

Mwandawiro Mghanga was arrested on 1 April 1986 and charged with possessing a seditious publication under Article 57 (2) of the Penal Code. He was tried 18 days later and sentenced to five years' imprisonment. He was among a large number of suspected government opponents arrested in 1986 and 1987 for alleged links with the clandestine left-wing organization Mwakenya, 11 of whom were detained without trial. Over 80 of them were convicted. Eight of the detainees have subsequently been released.

Mwandawiro Mghanga pleaded guilty to possessing an illegal publication Mpatanishi ("The Unifier") at a brief trial where he was not legally represented. He said in court that he had pleaded guilty after being threatened. He was not accused of advocating violence.

AI is concerned by irregularities in the trial proceedings and believes that he was denied the right to a fair trial in accordance with internationally recognized standards. It believes he was imprisoned for his political views.

Between his arrest and trial Mwandawiro Mghanga was held in Special Branch headquarters in Nairobi. AI has evidence that prisoners held there have been tortured and has received reports that during this period he was tortured.

Mwandawiro Mghanga was previously arrested in 1985 when he was chairperson of the Students Organization of Nairobi University (SONU) and sentenced to 12 months' imprisonment for convening unlawful assemblies in the university grounds. He was adopted by AI as a prisoner of conscience. AI received reports that he was also tortured on that occasion.

He is currently held in Kisumu prison, Western Province, where conditions are known to be harsh. He is married with one child.

Please send courteous letters appealing for his immediate and unconditional release to: His Excellency the Honourable Daniel T. arap Moi/Office of the President/P.O. Box 30510/Nairobi/ Kenya.

---

**SOUTH KOREA**

Soh Sung: aged 43, he was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1971 after being convicted of various "anti-state" charges which included spying for North Korea. He is one of AI's longest standing prisoners of conscience.

Soh Sung was arrested together with his brother Soh Joon-shik in April 1971, when they were students at Seoul National University. The brothers are Korean nationals but were born and brought up in Japan. They were charged with spying and acting as agents provocateurs for North Korea. They were also charged with visiting North Korea.

During his trial Soh Sung denied most of the charges against him although he admitted that he had visited North Korea to find out more about the country. He also claimed to have been tortured by South Korean security agents into making a false confession.

Soh Sung's trial was delayed while he was given hospital treatment for severe burns, which he suffered apparently after he tried to commit suicide during interrogation. He said later that he had wanted to kill himself to avoid the unendurable mental and physical pain being inflicted on him.

In October 1971 he was sentenced to death by the Seoul District Court. This was later reduced to life imprisonment on appeal. His brother was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment but this was reduced to seven years on appeal. He was released in May (see page 1). To AI's knowledge, the charges of espionage were never substantiated and their convictions rested on confessions which they claimed were obtained under torture. AI believes that they were arrested because of their interest in North Korean affairs and their views on Korean unification.

Soh Sung is in Taegon prison, Chongnam.

Please send courteous letters appealing for his release to: President Roh Tae-woo/President of the Republic of Korea/The Blue House/1 Sejong-no/Chongno-gu/Seoul/Republic of Korea.

---

**YUGOSLAVIA**

Vjenceslav Cizek: a 59-year-old teacher and writer, he is serving a 13-year prison sentence for "anti-state" activities.

Vjenceslav Cizek was first imprisoned from 1955 to 1957 because of a satirical poem he wrote. Following a wave of arrests and trials of nationalists in Croatia in 1971, he left Yugoslavia and was granted political asylum in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Here he joined an emigre organization and began to contribute articles, poems and caricatures to Croatian emigre newspapers in which he criticized Yugoslavia's socialist system and its political leaders and expressed his support for the aim of an independent state of Croatia (Croatia is one of Yugoslavia's six constituent republics).

In November 1977 he left his home in the Federal Republic of Germany. He had told his friends that he was going to Milan in Italy to meet a teacher from Sarajevo. On the way to Milan he disappeared. According to official Yugoslav sources he entered Yugoslavia illegally. All the available information, however, indicates that he was abducted by the Yugoslav state security police and brought back to Yugoslavia.

The nature of his work is not known and it remains to be seen whether his imprisonment is a continuation of a policy of repression against former fellow prisoners or the beginning of a new and more vigorous campaign.

Friends and relatives were unable to discover his whereabouts until August 1978, when he was brought to trial in Sarajevo on charges of "acting from counter-revolutionary positions" against the Yugoslav social system, and jailed for 15 years, subsequently reduced to 13 years.

Former fellow prisoners have reported that in the course of abduction Vjenceslav Cizek received permanent injuries to a shoulder and arm. Already frail and partially sighted before his imprisonment, he is now said to be virtually blind as a result of glaucoma. Lack of adequate medical treatment has further aggravated his health and in early 1988 he was in prison hospital. In a letter in 1983 he said: "My spirit is untouched and my conscience clear". He is currently in Zenica prison in Bosnia-Hercegovina.

AI has repeatedly called on the Yugoslav authorities to release Vjenceslav Cizek.

Please send courteous letters appealing for his release to: His Excellency/The President of the SFRJ/Lazar Mosjov/Bulevar Lenjina 2/Beograd/Yugoslavia.

---

**Death penalty**

AI has learned of 25 people being sentenced to death in eight countries and of 22 executions in four countries during May 1988.
Lethal force used

The use of lethal force by members of the Israeli Defence Force (IDF) in the Occupied Territories continues. Local medical personnel report that tear-gas appears to have caused or contributed to the deaths of over 40 Palestinians. Almost all the victims were vulnerable to tear-gas inhalation: babies, the elderly and the sick.

AI has details of seven cases of death after exposure to tear-gas. Symptoms before death were consistent with overexposure to tear-gas. Copies of medical or death certificates give cause of death as cardio-pulmonary arrest, respiratory failure, laryngeal spasm or cardiac asthma.

El Salvador

Over a dozen witnesses have testified that the Salvadorian army captured Mario Cruz Rivera, 16, Felix Antonio Rivera, 25, and Sebastian Gutierrez, 18, on 25 February in the village of Tempechin in Morazan department and later killed two of the three.

Political detainees released

The Ugandan Government announced the release of 1,671 political detainees in June. The announcement was made after the government signed an accord with the Uganda People's Democratic Army, an armed opposition group operating in northern Uganda.

In February AI delegates visited Uganda and were told that there were more than 4,000 political detainees. Most were arrested during army counter-insurgency operations in the north.

Over 200 were believed to be children under 18. In April, 94 children under 14 are reported to have been released; several hundred other detainees were apparently released before June.

AI continues to press the government to review the remaining detainees' cases and release those who are not going to be charged.

Lance Seera Muwanga, secretary general of the Uganda Human Rights Activists, was released in March. He had been detained since February 1987 for criticizing the army's human rights record. AI adopted him as a prisoner of conscience and his was one of five cases of human rights activists highlighted when it launched the campaign for "Human Rights Now".

Over 160 Palestinians have been killed by live ammunition fired by IDF soldiers since 9 December 1987. Many were killed during confrontations between the IDF and Palestinians protesting over Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The protestors have thrown stones, petrol bombs and other missiles, but have not used firearms. Those killed have included women, children under 14 years of age and elderly people. Some were not involved in violent demonstrations.

Strict guidelines dictate when the IDF may open fire. However, live ammunition, particularly high velocity bullets which are more likely to kill, has been used excessively.

For five weeks between mid-March and mid-April the number of those killed increased dramatically to 60 when the IDF adopted a more aggressive policy and soldiers were permitted to shoot directly at petrol bomb throwers. Deaths from shooting are continuing and nine were killed in June.

AI is concerned at the high incidence of fatalities from live ammunition, and the inadequacy of investigations. AI considers that there is evidence to suggest that the Israeli authorities at a high level have actively condoned, if not encouraged, excessive use of live ammunition against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

To date few cases appear to have been adequately investigated. One soldier has been sentenced to a year's imprisonment for deliberately shooting and killing a Palestinian. Disciplinary measures are reported to have been taken in a few other cases. AI is again calling on the authorities to make public details of how investigations are carried out and the results of all investigations which have been carried out.

AI is also concerned that the deliberate misuse of tear-gas in the Occupied Territories may have caused or been a contributory factor in the deaths of a number of Palestinians.

CS tear-gas, a riot control agent for outdoor use, is reported to have been deliberately misused by Israeli soldiers: it has been fired into houses, clinics, schools, hospitals and mosques. It has frequently been used in high concentration areas and has been found in residential areas.

Over 200 children under 18 have been killed by live ammunition and, according to the Israeli Army, there were 4,000 more. In 1987, the Israeli authorities at a high level have officially condoned excessive use of live ammunition, and the inadequacy of investigations. AI considers that there is evidence to suggest that the Israeli authorities have actively condoned, if not encouraged, excessive use of live ammunition against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

AI is again calling on the authorities to carry out investigations into the deaths of those killed and ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

Related to this, the Israeli authorities have adopted a more aggressive policy against Palestinians protesting against the occupation. Over 160 Palestinians have been killed by live ammunition fired by IDF soldiers since 9 December 1987.

AI is concerned at the high incidence of fatalities from live ammunition and the inadequacy of investigations. AI considers that there is evidence to suggest that the Israeli authorities at a high level have actively condoned, if not encouraged, excessive use of live ammunition against Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

The Ugandan Government announced the release of 1,671 political detainees in June. The announcement was made after the government signed an accord with the Uganda People's Democratic Army, an armed opposition group operating in northern Uganda.

In February AI delegates visited Uganda and were told that there were more than 4,000 political detainees. Most were arrested during army counter-insurgency operations in the north.

Over 200 were believed to be children under 18. In April, 94 children under 14 are reported to have been released; several hundred other detainees were apparently released before June.

AI continues to press the government to review the remaining detainees' cases and release those who are not going to be charged.

Lance Seera Muwanga, secretary general of the Uganda Human Rights Activists, was released in March. He had been detained since February 1987 for criticizing the army's human rights record. AI adopted him as a prisoner of conscience and his was one of five cases of human rights activists highlighted when it launched the campaign for "Human Rights Now".
NAMIBIA

Dozens detained without charge

Jason Angula is one of dozens of Namibians detained without charge or trial since late 1987. He was arrested on 7 October 1987 in Windhoek, the capital, and detained initially under Proclamation AG9 of 1977.

This proclamation denies detainees access to a lawyer or anyone else for the first 30 days of detention. It also provides immunity from prosecution to all members of the security forces for acts committed in “good faith” in connection with the use of their powers under the decree.

Jason Angula works for the Council of Churches of Namibia (CCN). He is also Secretary of Labour of the legal, internal, wing of the South West Africa People’s Organization (SWAPO).

The South African Administrator General, Louis Pienaar, claimed that Jason Angula was held for questioning and would be released or charged at the end of the initial 30 days’ detention. However, he was transferred to detention under the more restrictive Section 6 of the 1967 Terrorism Act, which permits indefinite, incommunicado detention for interrogation.

Although the authorities have not acknowledged where Jason Angula is held, he is believed to be in northern Namibia at Oshir. AI believes he may be a prisoner of conscience.

Many other Namibians arrested since late 1987 have been detained under Proclamation AG 9 of 1977.

There are reports that detainees have been subjected to hooding, partial suffocation and electric shock torture.

Some are held in connection with South African counter-insurgency operations in northern Namibia; others in connection with student protests against South African security force bases near their schools.

Two prominent human rights activists were detained briefly in June. One, Oswald Shivute, secretary of the Ovambo (“homeland”) Administration, was warned before his release against publicizing the numerous allegations he has received about atrocities by the South African security forces in northern Namibia, which he has been documenting since 1983.

Also in June, the editor of The Namibian newspaper, Gwen Lister, was detained for four days and interrogated about the source of an article describing draft legislation for emergency rule in Namibia.

She and other editorial staff have been harassed in the past because of the paper’s willingness to publish allegations of human rights violations by the security forces.

USSR

Al meets Soviet human rights body in Paris

AI has had substantive discussions with members of a new Soviet human rights body, and has agreed to more contacts in the future.

In early May, AI’s delegates met representatives of the Public Commission on International Cooperation in Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights in Paris. They discussed the review of criminal law now underway in the USSR and how proposed changes may affect AI’s concerns. They also explored ways to promote ratification and observance of international human rights agreements.

During the meeting, AI learned of the release of another 16 prisoners of conscience. AI continues to work on behalf of over 260 prisoners of conscience in the USSR and asked the commission to obtain information about a number of them.

The Public Commission is an official body formed in November 1987. It has around 40 members from legal, cultural and religious circles, and is headed by Professor Fyodor Burlatsky, a leading political commentator. In June, he called for the abolition of the death penalty and for non-custodial sentences for “anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda”—a law that has been used to imprison hundreds of prisoners of conscience.

SENEGAL

Political prisoners amnestied

At the beginning of June an amnesty was announced in Senegal for almost all people convicted of political offences.

The amnesty occurred after three months of widespread political arrests, particularly after a presidential election on 28 February. The election was followed by violent demonstrations in Dakar and the declaration of a state of emergency.

In May, leading members of the opposition Parti démocratique sénégalais (PDS), were tried. Abdoulaye Wade, PDS leader and a presidential candidate, was convicted of organizing a public meeting without official authorization and given a one-year suspended sentence.

His deputy, Boubacar Sall, was sentenced to two years’ imprisonment for inciting people to violence at a pre-election meeting in Thies. However, there was no proof to back this charge. After the state of emergency was declared in Dakar on 29 February, a number of peaceful demonstrators were detained briefly.

They included Abdoulaye Bathily, an opposition leader, and Amadou Sall, a lawyer.

On 4 June, the National Assembly approved an amnesty for all those convicted in connection with the post-election disturbances and a large number of people from Casamance accused of involvement in a separatist movement.

However, some 20 prisoners from Casamance whose cases are being investigated by AI have not been released.