

# amnesty international

... is a worldwide human rights movement which is independent of any government, political faction, ideology or religious creed. It works for the release of men and women imprisoned anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. These are termed "prisoners of conscience".

... opposes torture and capital punishment in all cases and without reservation. It advocates fair and speedy trials for all political prisoners.

... seeks observance throughout the world of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

... has consultative status with the United Nations (ECOSOC), UNESCO and the Council of Europe, has cooperative relations with the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States and has observer status with the Organization of African Unity (Bureau for the Placement and Education of African Refugees).

... is financed by its members throughout the world, by individual subscription and by donations.

# Religious persecution and political imprisonment

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1977  
Prisoners of  
Conscience Year



amnesty  
international

Among the many cases which Amnesty International "adopts" or investigates each year are numerous instances of the persecution of leaders or followers of a wide variety of religions.

In some instances, the imprisonment of a religious leader may stem directly from a government ban on a particular sect or religion; elsewhere, religious leaders, as a function of their ministry, have become so involved in the political tensions of their environment that they eventually face charges on political grounds — often charges of subversion or plotting resulting from their involvement in attempting to erase social and economic injustices.

Under the autocratic regime of President Thieu in South Vietnam, Buddhists struggled alongside Roman Catholics to defend basic human rights. In Moslem states such as Iraq, Iran, and South Yemen, religious leaders are amongst those who have been imprisoned or

executed in opposition to the governments in power. In a more extreme example, from Africa, ten Islamic leaders were executed in the Somali Republic in January 1975 for upholding the tenets of their religion on the status of women against the doctrine of the government.

In Latin America, the Roman Catholic church in particular has been prominent both in pressing for social change and in denouncing human rights violations and aiding their victims. In Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and elsewhere, Christian clergy have been responsible for exposing abuses of power to the outside world.

The Christian leaders in Latin America have had to pay this price in terms of imprisonment and torture, or, in the case of missionaries, expulsion.

In Africa, churchmen and religious leaders have been prominent in the struggle for a just society in the white-minority states

The defendants were charged under three articles of the Penal Criminal Code: the first charge was organising religious instruction for children, which contravenes the laws on separation of Church and State; the second charge was for disseminating fabrications slandering the Soviet state (this charge was based on confiscated religious material and letters describing the persecution of Christians in the USSR); the third charge was that of refusing to allow their children to join the Pioneers. This final accusation allegedly contravenes Article 227 of the RSFSR Criminal Code which states "...inducing citizens to refuse social activity or performance of civic duties".

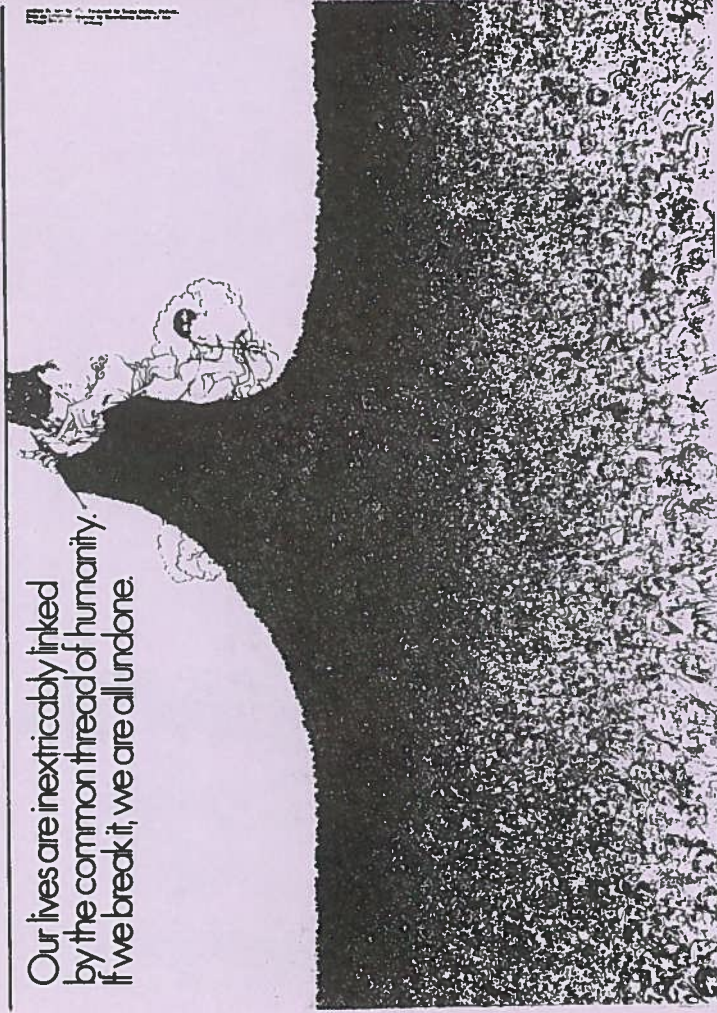
In his final statement to the court Mr Pavlov said that the right to teach one's beliefs to one's children was a basic human right, verified by several human rights covenants. The confiscated material which formed the basis

for the second charge, he said, contained nothing but the truth.

Mr Pavlov was deprived of his parental rights over his children and sentenced to 5 years in an intensified regime corrective labour colony near Alma-Ata, in the Kasakh Soviet Socialist Republic. He was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty in 1974.

**Mauricio Lopez, Argentina**  
Senor Lopez is a well known Argentine Christian scholar. He was rector of the state university of the province of San Luis until he was dismissed after the coup, in a massive purge of university teaching staff carried out by the new military government. This purge is believed to have been carried out in an attempt to curb supposed "subversive activities" in educational institutions.

Our lives are inextricably linked by the common thread of humanity. If we break it, we are all undone.



Senor Lopez is also an official of the World Christian Student Federation and at one time he worked for the World Council of Churches in Geneva. After his dismissal from the University of San Luis, he was appointed professor of the Theological Faculty in Buenos Aires. He had not yet taken up his post when he was abducted during the Christmas period of 1976.

Senor Lopez' abduction is related to the concern he had shown to the precarious situation of Latin American refugees living in the Mendoza area. Since the military coup, refugees, particularly from Chile and Uruguay, have been one of the major targets of government harassment. In addition to their often experiencing severe economic difficulties. There has been no news of Senor Lopez since his abduction at Christmas 1976.

**The Rev. Arote Vellah, Rhodesia**  
The Rev. Arote Vellah, a 40 year old minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church, was arrested at his home in Dibilishaba Tribal Trust Land on 20 May 1975.

After 2 weeks he was released from custody without having been questioned or charged. However, on 18 June he was re-detained. This time he was subjected to interrogation for a period of 22 days, during the course of which he was brutally assaulted and tortured with electric shocks. He was made to sign a false 'confession' statement, which was then used.

It was alleged that the Rev. Vellah participated in the recruitment of nationalist guerrillas, an offence which carries a mandatory death penalty in Rhodesia.

At his first appearance in court on 10 July, he repudiated this 'confession' statement. Nevertheless, he was remanded in custody until 25 August, when, shortly

before his trial was due to commence, all charges against him were withdrawn. But he was not released.

A 30 day detention order under the Emergency Powers Regulations was immediately served on him, and two days before this temporary order was due to expire he was served with a full detention order. This was signed by Rhodesia's Minister for Law and Order. Under the terms of this order he may now be detained for an indefinite period.

The Rev. Vellah is married and has three children. He was adopted as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty in May 1976.



**Yakov Nikolayevich Pavlov, USSR**  
Yakov Nikolayevich Pavlov (born 1935) is a member of the dissident wing of Evangelical Baptists in the USSR. He worked as a technical planner at the Tady Kurgan district Planning & Estimates Bureau. In February 1972, six "dissident" Baptists, including Mr Pavlov, were tried in Tady-Kurgan. All except one, whose sentence was suspended, were sentenced to imprisonment.

including such countries as Rhodesia and S Africa. In Rhodesia in particular, African church leaders have been amongst those detained indefinitely under emergency regulations designed to stifle nationalist opposition to the government of Ian Smith, while in October 1976 the white Roman Catholic bishop of Umtali was sentenced to 10 years imprisonment for failing to report the presence of nationalist guerrillas in his area. Church leaders have suffered in other parts of Africa. In Uganda, the editor of a Roman Catholic newspaper died in detention after his paper had displeased the government of President Idi Amin. In Malawi, members of the Jehovah's Witnesses sect have suffered expulsion from their homes, beatings, imprisonment, and even death because their religion prevents them from joining the ruling political party.

In Europe, Jehovah's Witnesses have also been imprisoned for long periods of time in Greece and Spain due to their refusal to

serve in the armed forces. In the Soviet Union, many religious believers, prominent among them Baptists, have been imprisoned by a state which, while guaranteeing freedom of religious worship in its constitution, places numerous restrictions on religious activities.

In several Asian countries, religious leaders have criticized their governments for denying individual rights. Church leaders and clerics have been imprisoned in South Korea and in the Philippines. Roman Catholic and Protestant churchmen have been deported from both countries, and the exercise by many priests of their religious and social roles has been regarded by governments as subversive.

The cases mentioned in this brochure are intended to serve as examples of leaders and members of various creeds who find themselves in prison on account either of their beliefs or of their attempts to put that belief into action. All are adopted by AI.

**Andreas Dedotis, Greece**  
Andreas Dedotis is one of about 30 Jehovah's Witnesses who are at present imprisoned in Greece because of their conscientious objection to military service.

There is no right to conscientious objection in Greece, and the 1975 constitution reaffirms in article 4 that "Every Greek capable of bearing arms is obliged to contribute to the defence of the fatherland as provided by law". Article 13 of the constitution states that "No person shall be exempted from discharging his obligations to the state, nor may he refuse to comply with the laws by reason of religious convictions".

The average sentence passed on conscientious objectors is 4½ years' imprisonment. Most Jehovah's Witnesses have their sentences reduced on appeal and receive remission for good behaviour. But these reductions are usually of only theoretical

benefit, since a conscientious objector is called up again as soon as he is released, and if he still refuses to serve, he is sent to prison again. This can continue until he has passed the maximum military age of 40, and Amnesty International knows of many cases of men now serving their third term of imprisonment.

Andreas Dedotis suffers from degenerative arthritis of the toes, and when he was first called up for military service three years ago, he was rejected because of his illness. He was told that after two years he would be completely discharged, but instead he was called up again. When he refused to do military service because of his religious beliefs he was brought to trial.

On 23 February 1976, he was sentenced to 4½ years' imprisonment. The sentence was reduced to 1 year on appeal because he submitted evidence of his illness. He was released in

September 1976, having been granted a remission of sentence for good behaviour.

After his release he was once again called up. Because he was late in presenting himself owing to family problems, he was charged with desertion. At his trial on 22 December 1976 he was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment, a much longer sentence than is usual. He is at present in Avlon prison, but will probably be transferred to Ioannina Military Prison where most Jehovah's Witnesses are held.

What you, your church, or religious organization can do to support Prisoner of Conscience Year.

- 1 Join Amnesty International and encourage others to do the same.
- 2 Subscribe to Amnesty International publications to be kept informed of Human Rights violations around the world.
- 3 Join the Amnesty International Urgent Action network and send telegrams in cases of extreme urgency.
- 4 Join the Prisoner of the Month scheme and send cards to selected cases of prisoners

in need of help, such as those included in this brochure.

- 5 Allow yourself to be contacted from time to time to intervene in particular cases of imprisoned co-thinkers.
- 6 Organize special collections for POC Year at appropriate times of the year.

• I/We want to join Amnesty International and enclose £ membership fee

100    500    1000

• Put me/us on the mailing list for Amnesty International's Newsletter during Prisoner of Conscience Year.

• Send copies of this brochure for distribution by/in my organisation

100    500    1000

• I/We enclose £ as a donation. Funds are urgently needed.

Name, address and organisation (if any)

# Petition

## for the Release of Prisoners of Conscience

During 1977 Prisoners of Conscience Year, Amnesty International supporters will be circulating the petition below. We welcome your help in obtaining signatures from colleagues and friends:

"We, the undersigned,

*OUTRAGED* that in many parts of the world, men and women who have neither used nor advocated violence suffer imprisonment solely because of their political or religious beliefs, their race, colour, or language;

this, despite the many humane and noble declarations of the assembled nations of the world, beginning with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights three decades ago,

*URGE the General Assembly of the United Nations*

to take swift and concrete steps to ensure strict observance in all countries of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

*and urge each and every government in the world*

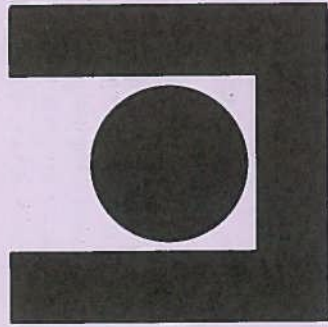
to act for the immediate release of all prisoners of conscience."

Please complete in BLOCK CAPITALS, with your signature, and return with coupon on back to:

Name	_____
Address	_____
Signature	_____
Name	_____
Address	_____
Signature	_____

Amnesty International, Promotion Department, PO Box 1341, Luxembourg.

Name	_____
Address	_____
Signature	_____
Name	_____
Address	_____
Signature	_____



## 1977 Prisoners of Conscience Year amnesty international

The Year 1977 has been declared Prisoners of Conscience Year. In a coordinated campaign, the groups and members of Amnesty International will seek to intensify public awareness and concern about violations of human rights wherever they occur and to bring greater support to prisoners of conscience throughout the world. Special contributions are being made by outstanding figures in the world of art, film, music, literature and design. Signatures will be collected in all countries for a petition urging: 1) the General Assembly of the United Nations "to take swift and concrete steps to ensure strict observance of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," and 2) urging all governments "to act for the immediate

release of all prisoners of conscience."  
Funds raised during this special year will be administered under the authority of the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International and will be devoted to the strengthening of the national programs and structures of the Amnesty International movement and for capital expenditure within the International Secretariat. The headquarters for the coordination of these activities has been established in Luxembourg:  
Promotion Department  
PO Box 1341  
Luxembourg

During Prisoner of Conscience Year Amnesty International will be producing lists of prisoners who are adoption or investigation cases in the following categories. These lists do not include all prisoners of conscience in the relevant category.

- Trade Unionists
- Journalists/Writers
- Parliamentarians/Politicians
- Medical Personnel
- Students/Teachers/Academics

And brochures on the following topics:

- Journalists/Writers
- Parliamentarians
- Medical Profession
- Lawyers
- Business World
- Peasants
- Churches
- Trade Unionists
- Women
- Teachers and Schools
- Youth Movements