

Children Appeal Leaflets

AI Index: ACT 76/007/2001

Children Action 2001

Join our campaign

Torture is used in well over half the countries of the world. Torture is neither inevitable nor natural. There is no shortage of information on how to stop it – only a shortage of political will. Amnesty International's campaign aims to put pressure on those with the power to stop torture. Help us to make a difference.

Make the world a torture free zone

- Contact your national Amnesty International office to find out more about the campaign
- Become a member of Amnesty International
- Make a donation to support Amnesty International's work
- Tell friends and family about the campaign and ask them to join too
- Register to take action against torture at www.stoptorture.org

I would like to join your campaign.

Please send me more information

I would like to join Amnesty International.

Please send me details

I would like to donate to Amnesty International's campaign to stamp out torture

Amount

Credit card number ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■ ■■■■

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Take more action online – www.stoptorture.org

Amnesty International, International Secretariat, Peter Benenson House,
1 Easton Street, London WC1X 0DW, United Kingdom

AI Index: ACT 76/007/2001

Albania

He was beaten, burned with a cigarette and cut on his arm.

End impunity for torturers

E. Sh., an 11-year-old orphan, was tortured after his arrest in June 2000 in Saranda, Albania; he was suspected of stealing a handbag. He was detained for 20 hours at Saranda police station — which is illegal under domestic law as the age of criminal responsibility in Albania is 12. During his detention he was beaten, burned with a cigarette and cut on his arm with a knife. He consequently “confessed” to the theft, although it was later discovered that someone else had stolen the bag. His injuries were confirmed by staff at the Saranda orphanage after his release. When an official of the national Ombudsman’s Office visited E. Sh. a month later to investigate the torture allegations, the injuries were still visible.

On the recommendation of the Ombudsman, the police officer allegedly responsible for torturing E. Sh. was dismissed from service. The Ombudsman also recommended that criminal proceedings be started against the officer, but the local prosecutor dismissed the case. There may be grounds for appeal against this decision.

E. Sh. is one of many children who have been tortured and ill-treated in police custody in Albania. A report issued in May 2000 by a local non-governmental organization (NGO), the Children’s Rights Centre of Albania (CRCA), concluded that torture was widely used by police to force children to confess to offences. It detailed cases in which children had been beaten on their heads, legs, arms and feet with batons or chair legs. Children had also been hung upside-down or had their head held under water by police. None of the children interviewed by the CRCA had made a complaint against the police for fear of further abuse. A March 2001 report by another NGO, the Legal Clinic for Minors, found that all but one of the 45 children they interviewed in detention in Tirana had been subjected to physical violence and beatings in police stations.

In another case, 17-year-old Marjol Dunda was detained for questioning by police in the town of Kuçova in October 2000, after a female classmate had received anonymous threatening letters. During his detention Marjol said he was beaten with a stick with iron nails in it by two police officers, one of them the father of the classmate, who also held a pistol to Marjol’s mouth and threatened to shoot him. As a result Marjol “confessed” to being the author of the letters, although he subsequently stated that he had confessed to avoid further ill-treatment. Marjol suffered various injuries on his face and body. The Ombudsman who investigated the case recommended disciplinary measures against one police officer and the dismissal of two others (including a superior officer who had allowed the ill-treatment to take place).

Albania has acceded to or ratified all of the major international treaties prohibiting torture, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Take a step to stamp out torture

Please write letters, or send faxes, calling on the government to:

- ensure that torture and ill-treatment are unequivocally and publicly condemned by officials at all levels, and that officials make it clear that such actions will not be tolerated and that those responsible will be punished according to the law;
- ensure that particular attention is given to the protection and rights of minors who are detained in police custody, and that expert advice is sought in this field;
- initiate legislation introducing a juvenile justice system and, pending its introduction, ensure that police, prosecutors and judges are given guidelines and training for working with children.

Send your letters to:

Prime Minister,
Kryetari i Këshillit të Ministrave,
Tirana, Albania

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister
Fax: + 355 42 34818

Minister of Public Order, Ministri i Rendit Publik,
Ministria e Rendit Publik,
Tirana, Albania

Salutation: Dear Minister
Fax: + 355 42 58625

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 37

States Parties shall ensure that:

- (a) No child shall be subjected to torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment...
- (d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance...

Article 39

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to promote physical and psychological recovery and social reintegration of a child victim of: any form of neglect, exploitation, or abuse; torture or any other form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; or armed conflicts. Such recovery and reintegration shall take place in an environment which fosters the health, self-respect and dignity of the child.

Article 40

1. States Parties recognize the right of every child alleged as, accused of, or recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others...

International human rights law considers that children — all people under the age of 18 — are entitled to the protection of the Children's Convention.

Russian Federation

No one of your son's name has been arrested
Investigate 'disappearances' and torture of children

Adam Abubakarov, a 17-year-old Chechen, has had no contact with his family since February 2000 when he was arrested at an army checkpoint in the town of Urus-Martan on suspicion of being a Chechen fighter. Amnesty International fears that he has "disappeared".

His parents have been told unofficially that he has been held in several filtration camps (army-run prison camps that allegedly "filter out" Chechen fighters from the fleeing Chechen population), where torture and ill-treatment are rife. His father was reportedly told in September 2000 that his son was in a prison in Rostov-on-Don. The authorities have denied that anyone of his son's name has been arrested, and no investigation has been opened into the case.

Fears that Adam Abubakarov may have been tortured arise from several reports of ill-treatment and torture of children in the "Internat" in Chernokozovo and other filtration camps in Chechnya during the first half of 2000.

For example, a 16-year-old boy called Albert, originally from the village of Davydenko, was reportedly beaten and gang-raped by guards at Chernokozovo camp. The guards subsequently referred to him by the female name "Maria". Timur, also aged 16, was reportedly beaten while held in May 2000 in a camp in Urus-Martan in order to force him to confess that his uncle, who was arrested at the same time, was a Chechen fighter. Timur was released after the family paid US \$700 to camp guards.

A survivor of the Chernokozovo camp told Amnesty International that between 16 January and 5 February 2001 he had shared a cell with a 17-year-old youth whose teeth had been sawn off with a metal file and whose lips were shredded, making it virtually impossible for him to eat or speak. The same survivor also said he saw a 14-year-old girl being gang-raped by prison officers in a corridor. The girl had reportedly come to visit her mother, who was detained in the camp.

The whereabouts of many children and adults from the Chechen Republic who have been arrested by Russian forces remain unknown, and none of the cases of alleged torture and ill-treatment of detainees has been investigated.

The measures taken by the Russian authorities are insufficient to end such abuses of human rights, and children who are arrested remain at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Take a step to stamp out torture

Please send letters or faxes to:

- the Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for Human Rights and Freedoms in the Chechen Republic, asking him to urge the appropriate authorities to investigate the case of Adam Abubakarov and all allegations of torture and ill-treatment in Chechnya and make public the names and whereabouts of all people who have "disappeared" in detention in Chechnya;
- the Procurator General of the Russian Federation, urging him to investigate thoroughly the case of Adam Abubakarov and all allegations of torture and ill-treatment during the armed conflict in Chechnya and bring the perpetrators to justice;
- the President of the Russian Federation, urging the authorities to support the work of the different bodies of investigation into human rights violations, particularly of children, in the Chechen Republic.

Send your letters to:

Special Representative of the President on Human Rights and Freedoms in the Chechen Republic, Vladimir Kalamanov, Rossiskaya Federatsiya, 103132 g. Moskva, Staraya ploshad pod. 6, Administratsiya Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii, KALAMANOVU, V.
Fax: + 7 095 206 7344

Procurator General of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Ustinov
Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, 103793 g. Moskva K-31, Ul. B. Dimitrovka,

d.15a, Generalnaya Prokuratura Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Generalnomu Prokuroru, USTINOVU V.
Fax: + 7 095 292 88 48

President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, g. Moskva, Kreml,
Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii,
PUTINU V.
Fax: + 7 095 206 6277

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 19

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child.

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[caption]

Photo: (Front panel) Adam Abubakarov, a 17-year-old Chechen, held in incommunicado detention by the Russian authorities. © Private

(Above) A drawing of the conflict in Chechnya by a Chechen child. From Children's Stories: Chechnya. © Vanessa Redgrave 2000

Democratic Republic of the Congo

‘Young people are... sent to the front to fight’

Stop the recruitment and ill-treatment of child soldiers

Jean-de-Dieu Razirera, Janvier Ntohondire, Sirasi Murihanio and Toranshire Asangira, all children, were reported to have been forcibly recruited by the RCD-Goma, the Goma-based faction of the armed opposition Rassemblement congolais pour la démocratie, Congolese Rally for Democracy, in Rutshuru in December 2000. They resisted, but were reportedly transported to camps in Masisi for military training. One of these camps — the Mushaki camp — 30 kilometres from Goma, is believed to have received over 3,000 new recruits, nearly 2,000 of them under 18 years old.

The long-running armed conflicts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have had devastating effects on the physical and mental integrity of the children who have been forced to

participate. They have suffered high casualty rates because of their inexperience, recklessness and lack of training, and many have been ill-treated or tortured and even killed by commanders.

A May 2001 report by an international coalition of non-governmental organizations (the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers) estimated that between 15 and 30 per cent of all newly recruited combatants in the DRC are children under the age of 18, and a substantial number are under 12. Both the Congolese Armed Forces and various opposition groups forcibly recruit children. The Rwandese Patriotic Army and the Ugandan People's Defense Forces participated in the recruitment of children by armed political groups in eastern DRC, and often oversaw the training of children. Congolese mayi-mayi militia, and Rwandese and Burundian Hutu armed groups are also recruiting children in large numbers.

Children playing in their neighbourhoods are reportedly seized by armed men, and are then armed and forced into combat. Some have been deliberately and arbitrarily killed by their leaders; many have suffered beatings and other forms of torture or ill-treatment, including rape. They have also been used as porters and cooks, and exploited for sex.

The DRC government has announced on several occasions, including June 2001, that it was going to demobilize child soldiers and reintegrate them into civilian life. However, many sources in the DRC say that children continue to serve as combatants with the Congolese Armed Forces and can still be seen carrying military weapons in many parts of the country. Those who have been demobilized have not been assisted to reintegrate.

In eastern DRC, children aged between 12 and 18 are regularly recruited into the Local Defence Forces (LDF), armed civilian forces set up by the RCD-Goma to defend local communities against attacks by Rwandese Hutu armed groups as well as by Congolese armed groups such as the mayi-mayi that oppose the Rwandese occupation of eastern DRC. Many of the children are later enlisted into the RCD-Goma armed forces and sent to the front lines. A church representative in Goma, describing the recruitment of children into the LDF, said: "Young people are trained for two weeks to one month and are then sent to the front to fight the militias."

The use of children as soldiers invariably violates rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Rwanda and the DRC. The Optional Protocol to the Children's Convention on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict raises to 18 the age for direct participation in hostilities, for both the armed forces and armed groups. It was adopted by the UN General Assembly on 25 May 2000 and is now open for signature and ratification. The recruitment of children under 18 into armed groups as well as their participation in hostilities is contrary to the fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

Amnesty International believes that the voluntary or compulsory recruitment and participation in hostilities of anyone below the age of 18 jeopardizes their mental and physical integrity. Amnesty International and the other members of the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers have been calling for the age of military recruitment in government or opposition armed groups, be it voluntary or compulsory, as well as deployment in hostilities, to be raised to 18.

Take a step to stamp out torture

Please send letters, faxes or e-mails urging:

- the ending of the recruitment of anyone aged under 18 into armed forces, as required by the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of Children;
- the demobilization of children in ways that are linked to legitimate employment opportunities and means of support and thus avoid the risk of re-recruitment.

Send your letters to:

His Excellency Joseph Kabila, President of the Republic and Minister of Defense, Présidence de la République, Kinshasa-Ngaliema,
Democratic Republic of Congo
Fax: + 243 88 02120
Email: UPP@ic.cd
Salutation: Dear President/ Monsieur le Président de la République

Major General Paul Kagame, President of the Republic,
Office of the President, BP 15 Kigali, Rwanda
Fax: + 250-84769/84390
Salutation: Dear President/ Monsieur le Président de la République

President Yoweri K Museveni, Office of the President,
Parliament Buildings, PO Box 7168, Kampala, Uganda
Fax: + 256 41 235462/ 257986
Emails: museveni@starcom.co.ug
Salutation: Dear President

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

Article 37

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- (d) Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance...

Article 38

1. States Parties undertake to respect and to ensure respect for rules of international humanitarian law applicable to them in armed conflicts which are relevant to the child.
2. States Parties shall take all feasible measures to ensure that persons who have not attained the age of fifteen years do not take a direct part in hostilities.

Article 39

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[caption]

Photo: (Front panel) A former child soldier at a Save the Children rehabilitation centre, Bukavu, October 2000. © AI

Egypt

‘They beat me with a cane and gave me electric shocks’

Investigate allegations of torture

“They accused us of stealing bicycles... When we denied this... they tortured us and they did bad things to us. They beat me with a cane and gave me electric shocks.”

Ahmad Mahmud Mohammad Hamed, a 14-year-old school pupil in al-Zaqaziq, Egypt

Fourteen-year-old Ahmad Mahmud Mohammad Hamed and his 26-year-old brother Mustafa were arrested on 26 March 2000 by police officers at their home in the Hassan Salih district of al-Zaqaziq. They were taken to the police station of al-Zaqaziq’s second precinct along with a teenage friend on suspicion of theft.

Following brief questioning, they were put in a cold room known as al-tallaga (the fridge) for about 30 minutes. From there, the youths were taken for interrogation one by one, beginning with Ahmad.

Ahmad told an Amnesty International delegate that he was blindfolded, had his legs and arms tied, and was then suspended by his knees from a horizontal pole. In this position, he was whipped and given electric shocks for about 30 minutes until he lost consciousness. He was then coerced into signing a confession regarding several cases of theft. After signing, Ahmad was returned to “the fridge”. The two other young men also signed a confession after being tortured.

For the first four days of his detention Ahmad was held mainly in the custody cell and for approximately a further 40 days in the detention centre attached to the police station. Throughout this period he was held with adults.

On 27 March 2000, the day after his arrest, Ahmad and the two others were brought for questioning before the local public prosecutor. The prosecutor did not ask about their condition or treatment. Ahmad was brought again before the public prosecutor a few days later. There were visible marks on his limbs as a result of torture and his lawyer demanded a medical examination. On 3 April a medical examination of Ahmad, conducted by a local health office, found injuries on his limbs and referred Ahmad for further investigation by a forensic doctor.

In two separate trials in April 2000, Ahmad was sentenced to a total of six months' imprisonment for theft. His brother Mustafa was acquitted in June 2000 by a Misdemeanours Court. The fate of the third youth is unknown. In May 2000 the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights filed a complaint about the torture of Ahmad with the Public Prosecutor.

In June Ahmad was transferred to Marga Juvenile Institution to serve his sentence. He was released on 28 September 2000. A week earlier the Court of Cassation had accepted an appeal against his conviction by al-Zaqaziq Juvenile Court and referred the case back to a different chamber of the court.

Take a step to stamp out torture

Please write letters, or send faxes or e-mails, calling on the government to:

- undertake a prompt, effective independent and impartial investigation into the case of Ahmad Mahmud Mohammad Hamed, and bring those responsible for any torture to justice.
- implement basic safeguards against torture to protect detainees, particularly juveniles, from torture and ill-treatment, including by ensuring that:
 - ◆ no child is interrogated without the presence of a parent, guardian or lawyer;
 - ◆ law enforcement officials conform to international standards regarding the absolute prohibition of torture;
 - ◆ evidence obtained through torture and ill-treatment cannot be used in court.

Send your letters to:

Counsellor Maher 'Abd al-Wahid, Public Prosecutor,
Dar al-Qadha al-'Ali, Ramses Street, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 577 47 16
Salutation: Dear Public Prosecutor
General Habib al-'Adeli, Minister of the Interior,
Ministry of the Interior, Al-Sheikh Rihan Street, Bab al-Louk,
Cairo, Egypt
Fax: +202 579 2031
E-mail: moi2@idsc.gov.eg
Salutation: Dear Minister

The Convention on the Rights of the Child

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[caption]

Photo: (front panel) Ahmad Mahmud Mohammad Hamed. © AI

(above) Re-enactment of torture method suffered by Ahmad Mahmud Mohammad Hamed and used widely in Egypt. © AI