

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: ASA 22/003/2002 (Public)
News Service No: 85
17 May 2002

Embargo Date: 17 May 2002 00:01 GMT

Japan: Not all foreigners are welcome

The treatment of foreign nationals in detention facilities at Japanese ports of entry reveals a disturbing pattern of human rights violations, including ill-treatment and incommunicado detention, Amnesty International said today in a new report *Welcome to Japan?*

Published as thousands of foreigners arrive in Japan for the World Cup, the report reveals that each year thousands of foreign nationals, many originating from developing countries, are singled out for interrogation, detention and deportation. Some are denied the right to seek asylum, while others are simply denied entry even though they have valid travel documents. Since September 11, there have been several cases of asylum-seekers who have been refused entry because they were from Afghanistan or the Middle East region.

There are reports that detainees have been held in windowless cells, sometimes for weeks without exercise, and denied access to legal advice and medical treatment. Private security officers who are in charge of these detention facilities, known as "Landing Prevention Facilities", are known to have beaten some foreign nationals. Detained foreign nationals have been forced to pay for their "room and board".

Immigration officials conducting interviews with the detainees have not provided adequate translation facilities and some detainees have been forced to sign forms which they are unable to read.

Amnesty International is urging the Japanese government to uphold international standards in the treatment of foreign nationals who are subjected to this arbitrary "fast-track" detention - deportation procedure. In particular to ensure that:

- no one is subjected to ill-treatment,
- any allegations of ill-treatment are investigated and the perpetrators are brought to justice,
- anyone detained is given access to legal advice, as well as advice from their embassy or consulate without undue delay,
- asylum-seekers are given access to fair asylum procedures and are not deported until their case has been assessed,
- staff are trained in human rights standards,
- independent inspectors are given regular and unrestricted access.

For a copy of the report contact rnarayan@amnesty.org

Public Document

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>