

## **BULGARIA**

### **The reported ill-treatment of Anton Mitkov Dimitrov**

#### **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CONCERN:**

Amnesty International is concerned about reports that Anton Mitkov Dimitrov, a 14-year-old schoolboy, was severely ill-treated by police officers in the town of Sliven on 29 March 1996.

Similar incidents of ill-treatment have occurred repeatedly in Bulgaria and Amnesty International is concerned by what seems to have become a pattern of police violence. The organization is continuing to urge the Bulgarian authorities to take the problem very seriously, and to demonstrate its willingness to do so by initiating impartial and prompt investigations into allegations of ill-treatment, publishing the results and bringing to justice those responsible. Furthermore, the authorities should devise and implement effective training for police officers with special attention given to issues like human rights, racial tolerance and peaceful conflict resolution.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

The following information, received by Amnesty International in connection with this case, is based on an interview with the victim by a local human rights organization and a medical certificate describing the victim's injuries.

On 29 March 1996 around 10pm Anton Mitkov Dimitrov, a 14-year-old technical school student, was walking home through the countryside just outside the east Bulgarian town of Sliven. At some point a car drove up to him from the back and as the area was deserted he became scared and hid in the bushes along the road. When the car stopped the boy saw that three police officers got out.<sup>1</sup> He came out of the bushes and walked towards them. The police officers started interrogating him and one of them beat Anton with his truncheon and kicked him with his boots in the knees and groin. After this he was handcuffed, put in the car and taken to the police station. At around 11pm the police rang his parents who came to the police station to collect him. They immediately took him to hospital where he was examined by a forensic doctor. A medical certificate states that Anton Mitkov Dimitrov suffered bruising on the nape of the neck and on his left wrist.

Amnesty International's concern that incidents like these are not investigated properly and impartially by the Bulgarian prosecuting authorities is reflected in the fact that in very few cases brought to the organization's attention are police officers alleged to have ill-treated people

---

<sup>1</sup>The identity of all three of them is known to Amnesty International

in their custody brought to justice. Furthermore, no replies have ever been received from the Bulgarian authorities to the many appeals sent to them by the organization expressing this concern. Amnesty International fears that the failure of the authorities to take proper action against human rights violations may lead those responsible for them to believe they can act with impunity and will encourage others to follow their example.