

## EXTERNAL

AI INDEX: EUR 30/04/95  
31 July 1995

### **ITALY: THE ALLEGED ILL-TREATMENT OF NASER HASANI, A ROM FROM FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, BY POLICE OFFICERS IN FLORENCE**

Amnesty International is seeking information from the Italian authorities about the outcome of a complaint of ill-treatment which Naser Hasani lodged against police officers in Florence in June 1994.

Naser Hasani, a Rom from former Yugoslavia, resident in a Roma camp outside Florence, lodged a formal complaint after being stopped by three police officers while driving a car with two companions (Antonio Bislimi and Izmet Hasani) near Santa Maria Novella railway station in central Florence at around 10pm on 7 June 1994. He said they checked his identity documents and accused him of using a hammer they found in the car to carry out robberies. He claimed that they then asked him to accompany them to the police station but instead drove him around the city and eventually stopped in Le Cascine park on the outskirts of the city, in the vicinity of a bridge called Ponte dell'Indiano, and kicked him, struck him with the hammer and racially insulted him.

He stated that the officers then abandoned him and that he walked to a phone booth from where he attempted to call an emergency police number for assistance but found the line constantly occupied. He then walked back to his camp, which took him approximately one hour. After his arrival at the camp his friends took him to the casualty ward of Careggi hospital for medical treatment. The hospital reportedly issued a medical certificate recording multiple cuts and bruises to his body. Naser Hasani attached a copy of the medical certificate to his subsequent complaint.

#### **Background Information**

During the 1990s there has been a noticeable increase in the number of allegations that people held in the custody of law enforcement and prison officers in Italy have been subjected to gratuitous and deliberate physical violence. In a report published in April 1995, Amnesty International pointed out that a high proportion of the allegations received by the organization concern immigrants from outside Western Europe - most of them from Africa - and an increasing number of Roma.

The organization said it was concerned that elements within some law enforcement agencies might be subjecting detainees to ill-treatment on a regular basis and that, although Italy had adopted certain legislative and administrative measures designed to combat the use of ill-treatment against detainees, in practice these were not being fully implemented. The report

cited numerous individual cases to illustrate the organization's concerns and drew attention to the lack of thoroughness in a number of judicial investigations into complaints of ill-treatment and to the nominal sentences frequently imposed in those cases where officers have been found guilty of ill-treating detainees. [See Italy - alleged ill-treatment by law enforcement and prison officers, AI Index: EUR 30/01/95, for further details.]

Amnesty International drew its report to the attention of the United Nations (UN) Committee against Torture which, in April and May 1995 considered Italy's Second Periodic Report on its compliance with the UN Convention against Torture. In its concluding comments the Committee emphasized its concern over the persistence of ill-treatment by prison and law enforcement officers and over "a dangerous trend towards racism", noting that the majority of victims of ill-treatment belong "either to certain foreign countries or to minorities". It pointed out that this concern was shared by the UN Human Rights Committee.

The Committee against Torture stated that, in its view, the punishments imposed on public officers in cases where trials had taken place did not appear proportionate to the severity of the acts committed.

The Committee recommended - *inter alia* - that Italy closely monitor the implementation of safeguards against ill-treatment during initial detention, with special reference to access to a lawyer and to a doctor. It also recommended that the government ensure that complaints of torture and ill-treatment be speedily and effectively investigated.