



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

NEWSLETTER

January 1988 Volume XVIII Number 1

SYRIA

Fears of torture

Over 150 people were arrested in August and September by the Syrian security forces on suspicion of links with the prohibited Party for Communist Action (PCA). In the same period, fifty members of another prohibited party, the Communist Party-Political Bureau (CPPB), were also arrested. All are being held without charge or trial and some are believed to have been tortured.

Those suspected of having links with the PCA were arrested by Syrian Military Intelligence, most of them by its Palestine Branch. On 11 August several PCA members were arrested in Damascus, including two members of the party's Central Committee — Akram al-Bunni and Wajih Ghanem. During the next two months, several hundred suspects were rounded up in Damascus, Homs, Aleppo, Lataqiyya and al-Tabqa, of whom approximately 150 remain in detention. Over 80 were arrested in Homs alone.

Most are being held in two interrogation centres in Damascus; the Palestine Branch and the Military Intelligence Branch, both under the jurisdiction of Syrian Military Intelligence. They include PCA members who had been sought by the authorities since 1980, as well as others arrested as hostages in lieu of people wanted by the authorities.

Some of the detainees are reported to have been tortured during interrogation. In September and October, AI sent urgent appeals on behalf of six of them said to need medical attention as a result of torture. Wajih Ghanem, a labourer, suffered a stomach haemorrhage and paralysis in his right hand 10 days after his arrest. Akram al-Bunni, a medical student, is said to be at risk of paralysis from spinal injuries incurred when he was tortured by a method known as the German Chair. 'Adnan Mahfuz, an electrical engineer, was transferred to hospital three days after his arrest for urgent treatment. The other three were women: Lina al-Mir, a medical student who suffers from heart disease, and two clerks — Thana' Huwajjah and Wafa' Idriss. AI is also concerned about the fate of Ghassan Qassis, a civil engineer suspected of links with the PCA, who was shot and wounded when he was arrested.

In a separate incident, five members of the CPPB were arrested in September by Internal Security. Their current whereabouts are unknown. In October, AI sent urgent appeals on behalf of two of them, George Sabra and Muhammad Munir Missouti, both arrested on 5 September and reportedly tortured during interrogation.

The health of Munir Missouti, a 54-year-old jurist and member



Wafa' Idriss



Ghassan Qassis

of the CPPB Central Committee, is said to have seriously deteriorated: he had been in poor health prior to his arrest, having had part of his stomach surgically removed.

At the same time AI also appealed on behalf of 49-year-old lawyer 'Abdallah Qabbara, a CPPB member arrested on 18 April, who was said to be at risk of losing the sight of one of his eyes as a result of torture during interrogation. □

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Prisoners amnestied

Four former senior government officials were among about 50 political and ordinary criminal prisoners who were either released or had their sentences reduced in an amnesty marking the 19th anniversary of Equatorial Guinea's independence on 12 October. AI had been investigating reports that they were prisoners of conscience.

Guillermo Nguema Ela, Tarsicio Mane Abeso, Jose Ondo Eyi, Damian Ondo Mane and two other senior government officials had apparently been arrested on suspicion of involvement in a plot to overthrow the government in July 1986. However, they were charged with "insulting the Head of State" and sentenced to 28 months' imprisonment in a military court in August 1986. AI considered that their trial had been unfair.

In September 1987, Equatorial Guinea acceded to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and to its Optional Protocol. Observance of Article 14 of the Covenant would require the institution of guarantees for the defence, such as an independent judge and the right to appeal, which have hitherto been denied to defendants tried by military courts. □



After three weeks of anti-government demonstrations in June, the government agreed to revise the Constitution. This was approved by referendum on 27 October.

SOUTH KOREA

New Constitution approved

South Korea has a new Constitution, approved by referendum on 27 October, which strengthens some individual rights.

Press censorship is now prohibited and publication and assemblies no longer need official authorization. However, in AI's view, several laws used to detain people still need to be amended.

Arresting agencies must now inform detainees of the reasons for their arrest and of their right to contact a lawyer. They must also tell relatives, without delay, where detainees are held. AI re-

gards this as an important practical measure to prevent the occurrence of torture.

The right of *habeas corpus* will be available to all detainees but, to AI's regret, the new Constitution failed to introduce the right of detainees to be promptly brought before a judge.

AI welcomes the improvements, and hopes that further progress will be made. □

CAMPAIGN FOR PRISONERS OF THE MONTH



Each of the people whose story is told below is a prisoner of conscience. Each has been arrested because of his or her religious or political beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin or language. None has used or advocated violence. Their continuing detention is a violation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. International appeals can help to secure the release of these prisoners or to improve their detention conditions. In the interest of the prisoners, letters to the authorities should be worded carefully and courteously. You should stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. In *no* circumstances should communications be sent to the prisoner.

PARAGUAY

Hermes Rafael Saguier: *a lawyer and leading member of the Liberal Radical Authentic Party, he has been charged with inciting violence and disobeying the law.*

Dr Hermes Rafael Saguier was arrested on 31 August after participating in a public meeting to call for constitutional reform. He has been charged under Law 209, a catch-all anti-subversive law which is routinely used against political opponents of President Stroessner. All but one of the other people arrested with him have been released.

From the time of his arrest Dr Saguier was kept apart from other prisoners in the *Guardia de Seguridad*, a high security prison, and allegedly held in an extremely confined space variously described as a niche or cupboard. The authorities initially denied that he was in custody and during this period he was allegedly beaten by the police. On 3 September he was transferred to the men's prison in Asunción, Tacumbú where he has since been held incommunicado.

On 10 November a judge ordered Dr Saguier's provisional release on the grounds that as his offence carried a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment, the Paraguayan Code of Penal Procedure entitled him to await trial in freedom. However, this order has not been carried out because the prosecutor was allowed to appeal against it to the Supreme Court even though the legal time limit in which appeals must be lodged had lapsed.

Dr Saguier's detention is a further incident in a pattern of official harassment and intimidation of members of opposition political parties or trade unions. Since July 1987 there has been an increase in short-term arrests following the start of a series of public meetings organized to mobilize popular support for democratization. People who have participated in the public meetings

have been ill-treated by the police and opposition party leaders and members have been arrested for short periods without apparent justification.

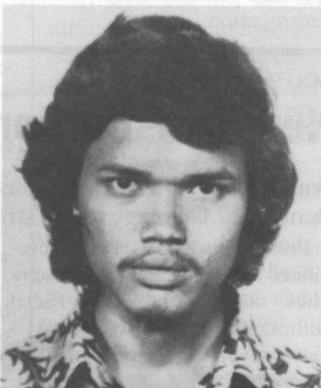
Dr Saguier was a political exile for many years, living in Argentina. He only returned to Paraguay in June 1986. He is a member of the Buenos Aires Bar Association. He is married and has one child.

■ Please send courteous appeals for his immediate and unconditional release to: Exmo. Sr. Ministro del Interior/Dr. Sabino A. Montanaro/Ministerio del Interior/Asunción/Paraguay. □

INDONESIA

Ali Masrum al-Mudhoffar: *a 26-year-old Muslim youth leader and radio broadcaster, he is serving a 12-year sentence for subversion, imposed on 7 September 1985.*

According to the prosecution, Ali Masrum participated in Islamic study courses in 1983 and 1984 which advocated the establishment of an Islamic state. He was also accused of possessing and distributing leaflets and cassette tapes critical of the government.



The first course mentioned by the prosecution was held in Central Java and called *Pengkajian Nilai Dasar Islam*, or Study of Basic Islamic Values. It was open to the public and had as a speak-

BULGARIA

Ibraim Ismailov Arifov: *a 48-year-old doctor, he is one of four people recently sentenced to up to 10 years' imprisonment for protesting against the forced assimilation of the ethnic Turkish minority.*

Ibraim Ismailov Arifov (pictured below, with his family) was arrested on 16 June 1986 with three others after having produced a number of pamphlets earlier that month calling on ethnic Turks to protest against the forced assimilation of the ethnic Turkish minority by boycotting the then

and have pursued a country-wide policy of forcibly assimilating them. Measures taken in the assimilation campaign include compulsorily changing the names of all ethnic Turks to their Bulgarian equivalents. Speaking Turkish is prohibited and anyone who does so may be fined. Ali knows of a



forthcoming elections.

He and his co-defendants were tried, reportedly *in camera*, and sentenced to between eight and 10 years' imprisonment.

Since the end of 1984 the authorities have consistently denied the existence of the ethnic Turkish minority, even though they make up 10 per cent of the population.

er a well-known parliamentarian named Imron Rosyadi. The second course, based on the first, was organized by Ali Masrum in Surabaya, East Java, and also had Imron Rosyadi as a speaker. The third course, a training workshop held in Yogyakarta, featured one speaker who criticized the state ideology, according to the prosecution, and said that Indonesia would be an Islamic state in 30 years. Neither the speakers nor the lecturers at any of the three courses have been arrested.

Ali Masrum was also charged with making copies of tapes of speeches by two Muslim preachers who spoke in Tanjung Priok, the port district of Jakarta, on 12 September 1984 shortly before a violent clash between Muslims and security forces. At

least 30 people were shot dead when government troops opened fire. The preachers were critical of the government and, according to the prosecution, made remarks which could be construed as encouraging hostility among religious groups.

Ali Masrum was also charged with having made 100 copies of a leaflet challenging the casualty toll in the official version of the Tanjung Priok demonstration and the government's handling of it.

Ali Masrum was not charged with using or advocating violence. He is currently detained in Kalisosok Prison, Surabaya, East Java.

■ Please send courteous letters appealing for his immediate release to President Suharto/Bina Graha/Jalan Veteran 17/Jakarta/Indonesia. □ and DK

Prisoner News

AI learned in November 1987 of the release of 128 prisoners under adoption or investigation. AI took up 92 cases.



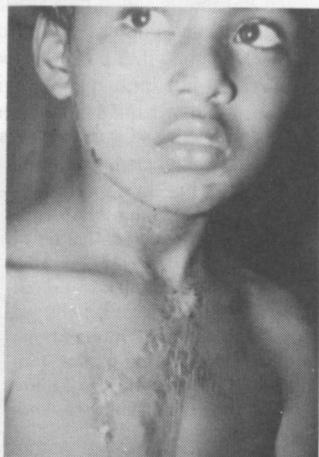
Amnesty International Focus on CHILDREN

Even children are under attack

Young victims of political imprisonment, torture and killing

Alberto Alarcón is eight years old. He lives with his father in Tungurahua in Napo province, Ecuador. One morning in May 1987, soldiers burst into his home and attacked him and his father. Alberto was thrown over a roll of barbed wire and beaten. His head was held under water until he almost drowned. The soldiers repeatedly asked him about a rifle they said a neighbour had stolen.

Noor Jahan was one year old when she was taken into custody with her mother and imprisoned in a Burmese jail. Today, she is 31 years old, and according to latest reports she is still there. Neither she nor her mother have



Alberto Alarcón: scarred for life after Ecuadorian soldiers attacked him and his father.

ever been convicted of any offence.

They were arrested with several dozen other Muslims of Bengali origin because they were suspected of being illegal immigrants; they have never been charged or tried.

A three-year-old boy, Cakwa Kastiel, was shot dead by soldiers in his mother's arms in a village in eastern Suriname. An eye-witness said that at about 3pm

on 1 August 1986 soldiers entered the small village of Morakondre and shot the child, apparently to frighten villagers into giving information.

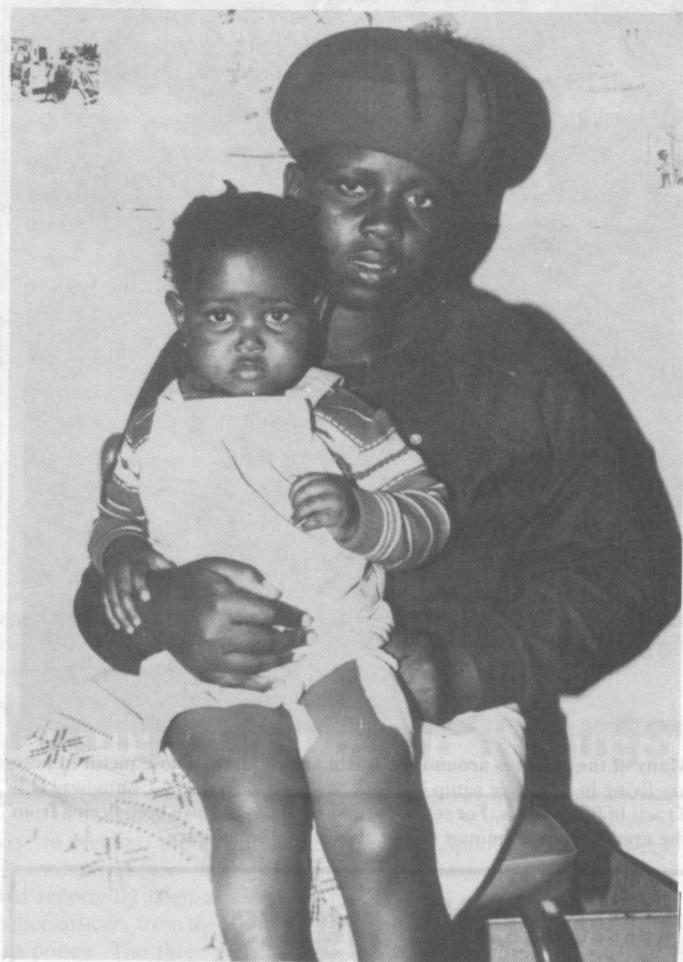
Horrible though these stories are, they are by no means unique. Innocence and vulnerability are no protection against abuses of power by the state. The most fundamental rights of thousands upon thousands of children are violated in countries all around the world.

Children have been unjustly imprisoned, tortured, killed and orphaned. Some have been forced to watch their parents being tortured. Others have been born in prison and taken away from their mothers after birth.

Torture of the innocent

Some children are tortured to extract information, some to force their parents to speak. Many of the young torture victims AI learns about appear to be tortured to frighten and intimidate their communities.

Distressing instances of the torture of children have reached AI from all quarters of the world: there is space here for only a few examples.



In South Africa this 14-month-old baby was shot with birdshot, used by the security forces. At a recent conference on children in apartheid South Africa, held in Harare, human rights monitoring groups estimated that from 1984 to 1986, some 11,000 children had been detained without trial, 1,000 children wounded, and 312 killed by police gunfire.

"Worse than the physical torture, I was subjected to psychological torture, much more cruel and shameful for mankind. They said, in front of my two-year-old daughter, in the torture chamber, 'If you do not speak, we will torture your daughter.' I had to live through the agony of listening to the cries of her mother who was tortured in Istanbul police station, unable to calm our weeping daughter." (From a court statement in January 1987 by Kemal Bilget, a Turkish teacher.)

Other children have been tortured in Turkey. Gendarmes are reported to have tortured four boys in April 1987 by giving them electric shocks to their mouths, which were bruised and bleeding. The children live in a village in southeastern Turkey where Kurdish guerrillas have been active, and police are reported to have rounded up all the men in the village and to have beaten them.

"One of the most awful memories I have is of children screaming through the night" a lawyer told a conference of doctors and social workers in Johannesburg in 1985. The conference was concerned about the long-term effects of detention and ill-treatment on children — anxiety, depression, behavioural problems, even psychotic episodes.

From the many testimonies of children who have been detained in South Africa under emergency regulations, a common pattern emerges. Immediately after arrest, children may be beaten for several hours while being continuously interrogated. Children have been hit with fists, sjamboks (whips) or rifle butts, and kicked. Attempted strangulation, electric shock torture (sometimes applied from hand-turned generators inside police vans) and beatings on the soles of the feet have all been reported.



Many of the refugees around the world are children. Those pictured here are living in a refugee camp in India having fled from the Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. For several years tribal people have been fleeing from the area to escape human rights abuses by the military.

Children's rights

The rights of children are receiving increased attention in the world of international human rights law.

Recognizing the particular vulnerability of the young, the fact that they cannot be held responsible for their actions in the same way as adults and their need for special protection, there have for some years been moves to establish a Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In 1959 the UN General Assembly adopted a Declaration on the Rights of the Child, and the proposed Convention would make some of these rights legally binding on states party to it. It would also cover areas that the original Declaration did not, such as the problems of children in detention.

In 1985 the UN endorsed Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice, which covered the treatment of children caught up in the criminal justice system. The rules say juveniles should be deprived of their liberty only

when there is no other appropriate response. They also rule out the death penalty and corporal punishment for the young.

A move is underway to supplement these rules by special new UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Protection of Juveniles Deprived of their Liberty — that is, rules covering the treatment of imprisoned children. It is expected that these will be drafted by 1990.

AI is one of many non-governmental organizations which have been meeting to propose ideas for the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the rules governing the treatment of imprisoned children. The UN Commission on Human Rights is expected to discuss how the Convention should be implemented in 1988. AI is pressing for the Convention to contain effective measures to ensure that the rights of children are protected.

Children behind bars

Amonsissa Issa has never known life outside prison walls. He is seven years old. A viral infection has left him mentally retarded. He has spent his entire life with his mother, a prisoner of conscience, in the Central Prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

His mother was seven months pregnant when she was imprisoned in 1980. A senior civil servant, she was one of several hundred people of Oromo ethnic origin arrested in February 1980. No official reason has ever been given for her arrest. Amonsissa's father is imprisoned too, in a separate prison in Addis Ababa, and has never been allowed to visit his wife or son.

In South Africa thousands of children, some as young as seven, have been arrested since the first state of emergency was declared in June 1985. Most were assaulted in detention.

According to official statistics, 2,000 children under 18 were detained between July 1985 and January 1986. In April 1987 the Minister of Law and Order stated that 1,424 children under the age of 18 were detained under emergency regulations. Many children have emerged from detention profoundly injured, physically and psychologically.

Under emergency regulations no one has the right to information about detainees — not even the parents of young children. Between midnight and 2am on the night of 13 August 1987, 22 children and young people were arrested in the small town of Petrus Steyn in the Orange Free State. When their parents went to the police station the next morning, they heard screams coming from the building. Neither they nor lawyers were allowed to see the children. Several days later, the children were released and said they had been assaulted in the police station.

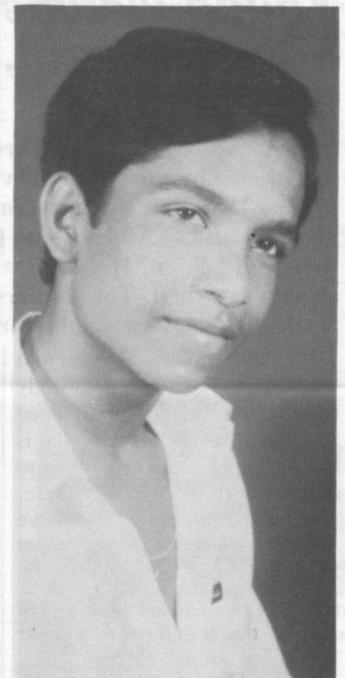
Kenneth Oloya, 17, and his brother Bosco Okura, 16, have been held by the army for nearly a year in Kirinya prison in Jinja, southern Uganda. They are reported to have been arrested by soldiers on 31 January 1987 in Kitgum, northern Uganda, an area seriously affected by the activities of armed anti-government rebels. Conditions in the prison where the children are held are believed to be very poor: malnutrition is widespread and a number of prisoners have died as a result.

School children, aged from 12 up, in Gaza and the West Bank have reportedly been ill-treated by members of the Israeli Defence Force either when they were arrested or in custody during inter-

rogation in army-run detention centres. Many have reported being punched and beaten with wooden batons, and kicked all over the body, sometimes causing serious injury.

During 1987 AI also received reports of dozens of schoolchildren suspected of having participated in demonstrations or stone throwing who were subjected to "speedy" trial with neither lawyers nor family present and sentenced to up to four months' imprisonment.

In Chile, many students and



Moḥammad Selim (above) was convicted in June 1985 by a special martial law court in Bangladesh for a murder committed a month after his 16th birthday. He was sentenced to death and, despite appeals, executed the following February. His sentence contravened international standards prohibiting capital punishment of people who were under 18 at the time the offence was committed.

schoolchildren have been arrested in the past two years during demonstrations against government education policies and held for a few days or hours in police stations. Some were beaten. Other young people have been followed, threatened and even abducted and ill-treated for up to 24 hours by clandestine groups linked to the security forces. For example, 14-year-old Michel Reyes Lagos, stepson of a political prisoner, was abducted on 10 November 1986, interrogated and beaten on the face. □

Children who 'disappeared'

Gnanaguru Aravinthan, a Sri Lankan Tamil, was just 13 years old in September 1985. Is he still alive? The last time his father saw him was on 5 September 1985, when he sent him home on his bicycle to change his clothes and return to a friend's house. He never came back.

Neighbours told the father they had seen his boy in the custody of soldiers from the nearby army camp — but at the camp he was told his son had not been arrested.

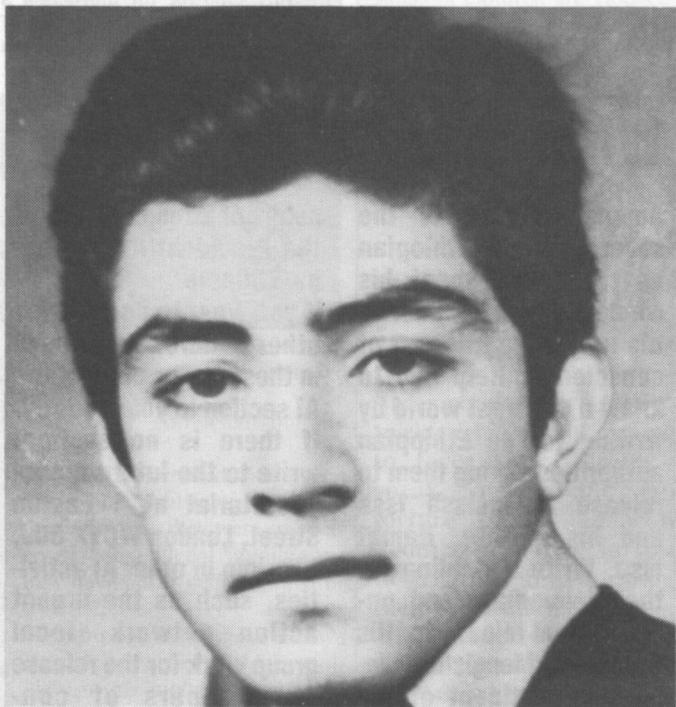
Gnanaguru Aravinthan is not the only Tamil child to have "disappeared" in Sri Lanka in the past three years: AI knows of 10 between the ages of three and 15.

Shams Rahman was a schoolboy at Esteghlal High School in Kabul, Afghanistan, when he was arrested with two of his classmates in 1979. His father cannot think of any reason for the boy's arrest, apart from rumours that the authorities were victimizing bright and articulate students.

Shams was detained at the Sedrat interrogation centre of the security police, and his father was able to keep in touch with him until December 1979, when Babrak Karmal came to power with the backing of Soviet forces. Since then he has not been able to find out what has happened to his son.

Boris Marco Yuncacallo, a 14-year-old Peruvian schoolboy, was detained by a marine patrol on the evening of 27 October 1983. He was on his way to buy sugar.

Neighbours corroborated the family's version of events — but marine and police authorities have continued to deny that Boris was ever arrested. All attempts to find him by his parents, the courts and the Public Ministry have failed.



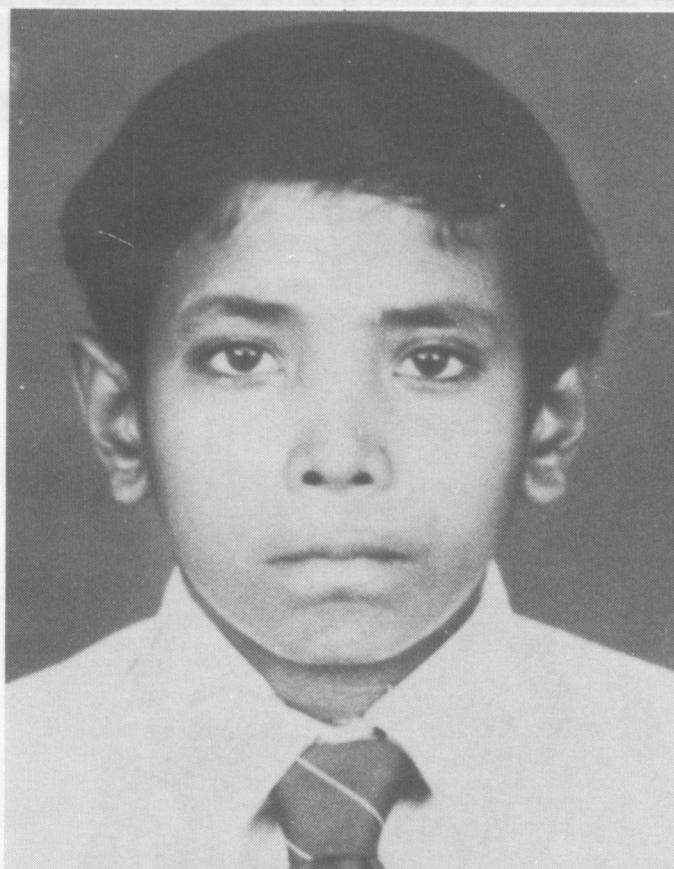
Schoolboy Shams Rahman has not been heard of since December 1979.

Boris is by no means the only schoolboy from Peru's Andean "emergency zone" to have "disappeared" after being arrested by the security forces.

There are over 100 children still missing in Argentina today as a result of human rights violations during the second half of the seventies. Although some were abducted with their parents by the security forces, the majority were born in secret detention centres and forcibly separated from their mothers shortly after birth.

"Subversive parents teach their children subversion. This has to be stopped." (*General Ramon Camps, former police chief, Buenos Aires.*) This was apparently the thinking behind a deliberate policy of removing young children from families regarded as subversive: some ended up in orphanages, many were taken by families connected to the police, military or security services who claimed the child as their own.

Since 1977, 41 children have been located, largely thanks to the efforts of the human rights group formed by the grandmothers of the missing children. Some have been returned to their real families while others remain with their adoptive families but are in contact with their relatives. Some, however, died violently at the hands of the military and many others are the subject of protracted legal disputes. □



Gnanaguru Aravinthan is one of 10 Tamil children AI knows of aged between three and 15 who have "disappeared" in Sri Lanka in the past three years. He has not been heard of since September 1985.

Young victims of killings

On 6 June 1987 two bodies were found in a sugar cane field in Talisay, in Negros, the Philippines. One month earlier, three people had reportedly been arrested by police officers from the Kabankalan police. The three were supporters of a left-wing candidate in the Philippine congressional elections of 11 May. One, Junie Academia, was just 15 years old. One of the two bodies — disfigured by hack wounds — is believed to be his.

Children as young as two — and elderly people in their eighties — were among the 17 victims of a massacre by government troops in Lupao in the Philippines on 10 February 1987, two days after the breakdown of a ceasefire between the government and the New People's Army (NPA), the armed wing of the Communist Party of the Philippines.

Massacres of civilians in which children die alongside their parents are confined to no one region of the world. In Colombia four children of the Cantillo family died on 14 April 1987 when soldiers threw a grenade into their home and sprayed it with gunfire. Marelis and Darilus were three years old, Johana was only two, and Vidal was 12. Their mother was shot dead — most of the men of the family managed to escape.

Over 200 people were killed by

Syrian troops and Syrian-backed forces in the northern Lebanese city of Tripoli in the third week of December 1986. Among the dead were women and children, some of whom had been shot in the head, according to witnesses.

A Burmese family of six were gathered in their hut on the outskirts of Kho-ma-ha village in late December 1985 when a group of soldiers opened fire on it, apparently without warning. According to reports, 10-year-old Patahwee was hit in the shoulder, Suphalee, an old man, was hit in the thigh, and Napolay, a young pregnant woman was wounded in the chest and stomach. She was then dragged through the village until she died. The soldiers are reported to have told the villagers that she was the wife of an armed rebel.

In Iraq some 300 children and young people were arrested in the northern town of Sulaimaniya in late 1985. At least 29 of the detainees were reported to have been executed later in secret: some had apparently had their eyes gouged out, and bodies returned to families bore marks of torture.

Seven of the executions have been confirmed by the government. AI believes they were seized in retaliation for the political activities of their parents or relatives.



The Carachoche family of Argentina were finally reunited in 1985. The mother and two children had been abducted by the security forces; the father had been forced into hiding.

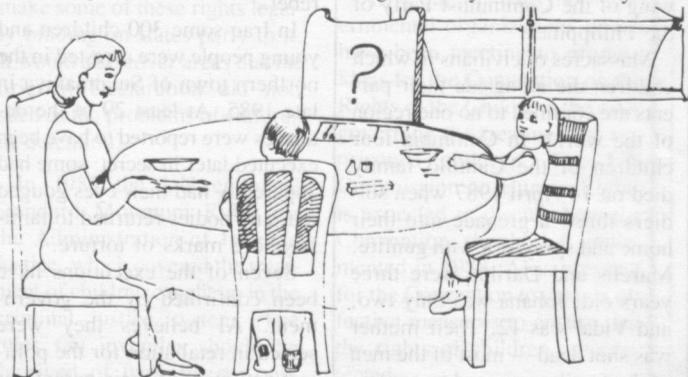
'Disappeared' parents

"The years passed and the child grew up and asked for his mother. I had to answer truthfully 'the soldiers took her away but she will come back'. And the child longed for his mother to return and used to say 'When Mummy comes, we'll raise chickens', or 'We'll buy such and such a thing'.

"But suddenly one day he surprised me and said 'Daddy, I think the soldiers killed Mummy'; now he won't talk about it. He's 13." (The husband of Monica Chislayne Llanca Iturra, who "disappeared" in Chile in September 1974, when her son was two years old.)

The wife and daughter of "disappeared" Guatemalan teacher Hugo de León Palacios, abducted on 9 March 1984, placed the following advertisement in the

press: "To those who stole my Daddy, Hugo de León Palacios: I ask those who stole my Daddy to let you come home for just a moment so that I can see you and assure you, Daddy, that I'll grab your hand tightly so that they'll never take you again. Every night I ask God to tell those men to release you, and you come home soon and I'll hide you so that they won't find you. I want you to be with us Daddy. Mummy says you'll come soon, maybe tonight, right Daddy? Your Audrey."



Sketch taken from a book published by relatives of the "disappeared" in Chile, telling their story.

Executions

"Retribution or vengeance seems difficult enough for a government to justify where adult offenders are involved and vengeance against children for their misdeeds seems quite beyond justification . . . The spectacle of our society seeking legal vengeance through the execution of children should not be countenanced." (American Bar Association report)

International human rights standards are perfectly clear: no one who was less than 18 years old at the time of the crime should be put to death as punishment. Execution — with its uniquely cruel and irreversible character — is a wholly inappropriate penalty, especially for individuals who have not attained full physical or emotional maturity.

Children and adolescents are widely recognized as being less responsible for their actions than adults, and more susceptible to rehabilitation, rendering the death penalty a particularly inhuman punishment in their cases.

Yet children have been executed — in the USA, in Iran in the early 1980s, in Iraq, Bangladesh, Barbados and Pakistan. AI knows of juveniles who have been sentenced to die by hanging, electrocution, lethal injection and firing-squad.

On 11 September 1985 in Texas, Charles Rumbaugh became the first juvenile offender to be executed in the USA since 1964. Two other juvenile offenders were executed, in 1986, and at least 30 others were on death row in November 1987. They were all between 15 and 17 years old at the time the crimes of which they were convicted were committed.

Only 11 of the death penalty states in the USA prohibit the execution of minors. In Montana and Mississippi, children as young as 12 and 13 respectively could, in law, be executed. Ten states do

not specify a minimum age limit.

Mohammad Azeem, a 15-year-old boy, is on death row in a Pakistan prison. He was arrested in 1984 and charged with murder and robbery. He and nine others were sentenced to death by a special military court, although on appeal all the accused except Mohammad had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

Mohammed Selim was also sentenced to death by a special court — a special martial law court in Bangladesh. He was convicted of a murder that took place in February 1985, a month after his sixteenth birthday. He was executed in February 1986.



American Paula Cooper, now 18, was sentenced to death in Indiana in July 1986 for the murder of a 78-year-old woman. She was one of at least 30 juvenile offenders on death row in the USA in November.

What you can do

Amonsissa Issa is the seven-year-old Ethiopian boy who has spent his whole life imprisoned with his mother, a prisoner of conscience. Help him to know a different world by writing to the Ethiopian authorities asking them to release Amonsissa Issa and his mother, Namat Issa. Write appealing for their immediate and unconditional release to: His Excellency Mengistu Haile-Mariam/President of the People's Democratic Re-

public of Ethiopia/Office of the President/Addis Ababa/Ethiopia.

If you want to do more for other children mentioned in these pages contact the AI section in your country. If there is no section, write to the International Secretariat at 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, UK. Join in other AI activities, such as the urgent action network, local group work for the release of prisoners of conscience, or fundraising.

HAITI

Lawyer shot dead

Presidential candidate and lawyer, Yves Volel, was killed on 13 October outside *Recherches Criminelles*, the Port-au-Prince police headquarters. Eye-witnesses say his assailants were plainclothes policemen from the police headquarters. AI has called on the Haitian authorities to investigate his killing.

Yves Volel had gone to the police station to seek the release of a client who had been in unacknowledged detention for several weeks, and to publicize the allegations of ill-treatment and torture at *Recherches Criminelles* being made by his client and other prisoners. When he arrived, he was met by a group of journalists. He quoted the relevant articles of the Constitution and said he was ashamed to see Haitians torturing and ill-treating others.

He was about to speak to for-

eign journalists in English when four men in plain clothes approached him and started to hit him. At the same time, shots were fired, and he was fatally wounded. The journalists who witnessed the killing had their equipment smashed and film confiscated by members of the security forces.

AI has repeatedly expressed its concern to the Haitian authorities about the ill-treatment and torture of detainees. Arrests in Haiti are routinely carried out without warrant, and are frequently not ac-



© Haiti Observateur

Haitian lawyer, Yves Volel, moments before his death.

knnowledged for weeks or months; during this period of incommunicado detention ill-treatment and torture occurs.

Reports of grossly inadequate prison conditions have been received, particularly at *Recherches Criminelles*, where Yves Volel was shot. According to one ex-prisoner, 104 people were be-

ing held there in October in severely overcrowded conditions and he was told by other prisoners that 48 people had died there in the previous six weeks. Another former detainee at the police headquarters, said he saw prisoners with gaping wounds, and that children as young as 10 years old were among those held. □

INDIA

Unarmed civilians killed deliberately

There is strong evidence that the north Indian provincial police are responsible for the deliberate killing of dozens of unarmed civilians and the "disappearance" of dozens more in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) were called in to help quell Hindu-Muslim communal violence in May in the city of Meerut.

The PAC is alleged to have thrown some of the 80 corpses known to have been recovered into rivers and canals, and to have burned others. AI has the names of 29 of the dead and of another 32 people listed as "disappeared". All were Muslims.

AI has obtained first-hand accounts of these incidents from victims and eye-witnesses as well as other sources, which it has published in a recent report*.

On 22 May, several hundred men were rounded up in the Hashimpura area of Meerut by the PAC and taken away in trucks. Although most ended up in police stations or jails, several dozen were reportedly driven to the Upper Ganga canal, near Muradnagar, where they were shot and their bodies thrown in the water.

A student, who was shot but escaped by feigning death, testified that PAC members took the men to "a canal, late in the night. The dozen or so PAC men then . . . loaded their rifles and began shooting . . . I could hear shots ringing out continuously and the sound of bodies splashing into the canal."

The next day, PAC members went on a rampage in the village of Maliana, about 10km west of Meerut, shooting unarmed men,

women and children. The authorities initially said a "few people" had died. Later "only 15" were said to have been killed. AI has the names of 29 people who were killed then and believes there were more.

The authorities have continued to deny that the PAC were responsible for these killings. An Indian embassy official explained the Hashimpura allegations by stating that "police uniforms were stolen and used as a disguise by anti-social elements". AI does not find this explanation credible.

In June, the Uttar Pradesh government established an inquiry into the Hashimpura allegations. Six months after the killings no findings have officially been made public. AI has called for an independent inquiry by a judicial body. An Allahabad High Court judge is still conducting a judicial inquiry into the Maliana killings.

AI has called on the Indian Government to take all possible steps to find out what happened, publish the results of inquiries, bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations and grant adequate compensation to the victims. There should also be a review of the composition, structure and training of the Hindu-majority PAC.

AI presented its report to the Indian Government for comment before publication but received no response. The Home Ministry declined to comment on the report, but acknowledged that "there have been deaths on a massive scale" and stated that "the government has taken steps". A ministry spokesman was also reported to have acknowledged that the composition of the PAC should be more broadbased.

AI also sent the report to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and expressed its regret at remarks he made on his return from a visit to Canada and the United States. He was quoted as saying that the government doubted the credibility of AI's work and the seriousness of its approach. AI pointed

out that several Indian government officials had repeatedly expressed appreciation of the organization's work.

AI emphasized the importance it attached to developing a dialogue with officials about the protection of human rights globally as well as in India. It had therefore frequently sought meetings with Indian government officials in recent years, but had received no response. Entry for its delegates to visit India had frequently been refused. AI again requested a meeting with the Prime Minister and other officials to discuss its concerns. □

*Allegations of extrajudicial killings by the Provincial Armed Constabulary in and around Meerut, 22-23 May 1987

BAHRAIN

Fourteen imprisoned following unfair trial

Fourteen out of 18 men on trial for involvement in the banned Bahrain National Liberation Front have been sentenced to either three or five years' imprisonment. The verdicts were delivered on 28 October.

Three of the remaining defendants were acquitted and one was released, having already spent more than his one-year sentence in prison. AI observed sessions of the trial in April and in June.

AI has welcomed the acquittals but is concerned that defendants tried by the Supreme Civil Court of Appeal, as these were, have no

right of appeal against conviction and sentence and may be convicted solely on the basis of an out of court confession.

AI has called for an independent inquiry into allegations that the defendants were tortured during interrogation, and for a fair trial for those imprisoned or their immediate release. □

TURKEY

Political leaders jailed

Two leading members of the banned Turkish Communist Party (TKP) and Turkish Workers' Party (TIP) returned home from years in exile on 16 November and were promptly arrested.

Haydar Kutlu, aged 43, TKP Secretary General and Dr Nihat Sargin, aged 61, TIP Secretary General, were taken to Ankara Police Headquarters and held incommunicado for three weeks. Charges against them include leadership of illegal organizations.

Hundreds of Turkish citizens have been jailed since 1980 for belonging to the TKP and the TIP. On 28 October, 104 defendants had their sentences of up to 16 years' imprisonment confirmed

by the Military Appeal Court in Ankara.

In October the TKP and TIP merged to form the Turkish United Communist Party. The two leaders returned as part of an attempt to legalize communist activities in Turkey. Leaders of other political groups have already announced their intention to return to Turkey. Under current legislation they also face imprisonment.

President Kenan Evren and Prime Minister Turgut Özal have



Dr Sargin being arrested at the airport. He and Haydar Kutlu told their lawyers that they were severely tortured in their first week in custody.

publicly announced that in their view the time to legalize communist activities has not yet come in Turkey. Prime Minister Özal said it would take at least five years to change the relevant legislation.

AI has called for the immedi-

ate and unconditional release of Haydar Kutlu and Dr Nihat Sargin. According to AI's information neither the two men nor their political parties have ever used or advocated violence. The organization has adopted both men as prisoners of conscience. □

EL SALVADOR

Four hundred released under amnesty

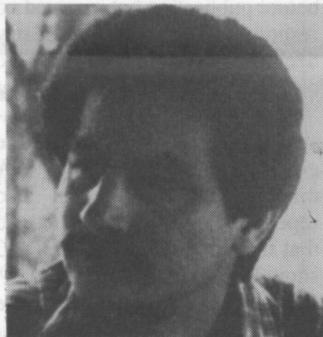
Over four hundred Salvadorian political prisoners were amnestied in November as a result of the Central American peace plan. The plan, proposed by President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica in August, provided an absolute amnesty for prisoners implicated in political crimes and common crimes connected with them, including those not yet charged.

Many of those released had been held without trial, some for as long as six years: the authorities cited "confessions" signed under torture as proof of guilt. They had remained in prison even though the emergency legislation under which they were detained had lapsed early in the year. However, 13 political prisoners are reportedly still detained.

AI is also concerned for the physical safety of those released, none of whom had the opportunity to plead their innocence before the courts. Before the amnesty, AI had received reports that political prisoners released on technical grounds or through irregular procedures had "disappeared" or been killed.

Furthermore, Decree 618, which was passed in March, remains on the statute books. In the event of another state of siege, this decree would govern proceedings in political cases. It allows prolonged detention without trial and the use of extrajudicial statements. In AI's experiences both these practices facilitate torture.

Of grave concern is the fact that the amnesty has been extended to members of the security forces and their agents responsible for past human rights violations. Only the murderers of Archbishop Oscar Romero, shot dead in March 1980, and of human rights leader Herbert Anaya Sanabria who was killed in October 1987, are ex-



Trade unionist Jorge Salvador Uba Barrientos, seized in September, was not among those released in the amnesty. His detention has never been acknowledged: he is one of the thousands of "disappeared".

empted from the amnesty.

AI fears that this will make it difficult to bring to light the facts about previous "disappearances" and political killings and encourage perpetrators of such abuses to believe they can continue to act with impunity. Since the amnesty there have been reports of political killings and "disappearances" carried out by members of the security forces, acting both in uniform and in the guise of the so-called "death squads". □

Death Penalty

AI has learned of 56 people being sentenced to death in nine countries and of 54 executions in nine countries during October 1987.

SOMALIA

Fears over trial

Six former members of the Somali parliament, who have been detained since 1982, are due to be brought to trial before the National Security Court (NSC) in Mogadishu on 1 February 1988.

The six, Ismail Ali Abokor, Osman Mohamed Ghelle, Omar Arteh Ghalib, Omar Haji Mohamed, Mohamed Aden Sheikh, Mohamed Yusuf Weirah, are reportedly to be charged with treason, which carries a mandatory death sentence. AI has adopted all six as prisoners of conscience.

Defendants appearing before the NSC do not receive fair trials in accordance with international standards. They are allowed to see lawyers, but only for brief periods and usually not in private,

shortly before the trial starts. There is no right of appeal to a higher court.

Civilians are tried by military judges who are often not qualified in law. Many trials appear to be of a summary nature, and there is particular concern that the NSC may not operate as an independent judicial body.

AI has asked the Attorney General for details of the charges and assurances that international observers will be permitted at the trial. □

YUGOSLAVIA

Teenagers convicted of 'hostile propaganda'

Four young Yugoslav men, two of them minors, have been convicted of "hostile propaganda". AI has called for an investigation into the pre-trial proceedings against the two youngest (both 17 years old and, because they are minors, identified only by their initials, VG and DK).

Reports AI has received allege that VG was not allowed to see a lawyer until five days after his arrest on 9 September. His mother was not allowed to see him until 18 September. DK's elderly mother was refused permission to see her son when she first went to the prison and he was visited by VG's mother for the first time three weeks after his arrest, when he was described as trembling and tearful. A prison guard refused to let the two youths have textbooks brought by VG's mother.

At their trial, VG and DK and the two other young men, Siniša

Maksimović and Dragan Baltić, both 18 years old, reportedly admitted they had founded a "hostile organization" in 1984 with the aim of creating a "Balkan republic", if necessary by force. At the time the youths were 14 and 15 years old. Apparently all they did was write a statute and program and paint slogans on school walls such as: "Down with the red dictatorship".

On 19 November the District Court of Kragujevac sentenced Siniša Maksimović and Dragan Baltić to eight and five months' imprisonment respectively, and put VG and DK on probation. □