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Women in Brazil take a stand against guns

In the last 10 years, 300,000 people have been killed in Brazil, largely as a result of urban violence and the proliferation of guns in the country. While 24 men are killed for every one woman, every death leaves a grieving mother, wife, sister, girlfriend or friend. Now the women of Brazil are uniting to try to put an end to the terrifying escalation of violence and gun crime.

On Mother's Day, 13 May 2001, the Brazilian non-governmental organization (NGO) Viva Rio launched a campaign under the slogan "Arma Não! Ela Ou Eu." ("Choose gun-free! It's your weapon or me."). Their aim was to bring together women from all sections of Brazilian society to force the men of Brazil to give up their guns. At the launch, attended by actresses, journalists, artists, mothers who had lost their children and wives who had lost their husbands, white flowers were distributed together with pamphlets explaining that owning a gun does not guarantee the protection of your family, but rather puts them at greater risk.

Urban violence in Brazil is endemic, and there is no doubt that Brazilian society lives in fear. Those living in poor urban communities are trapped in a no-man's land between the violence of criminal gangs, who commit serious crimes including torture and killings, and that of the state response to them. The police forces are underfunded, poorly equipped and trained, and resort to brutal, ad hoc solutions and human rights violations in the absence of a coherent approach to public security issues. AI has begun researching the links between urban violence and human rights violations and in December last year, a representative of Viva Rio, an important partner for AI, visited AI's International Secretariat to talk about their campaigns against this spiralling violence, especially those involving women.

Viva Rio, one of Brazil's largest NGOs, was created in 1993 in response to two appalling massacres of unarmed civilians by military policemen. Seven street children and one young adult were killed at the Candelária Church, Rio de Janeiro, in July, and a month later, 21 people were shot dead by a group of hooded gunmen who spent two hours shooting indiscriminately at residents in the Vigário Geral shanty town. AI has campaigned and lobbied about these massacres ever since, with some success.

Viva Rio is working with the poorest communities of Rio de Janeiro to find practical local solutions to the problems of gun crime. Initiatives include working with the local police to set up a system for storing and recording guns that are seized, with the aim of tracing the source of the guns and ensuring that they are not reintroduced into the community, and pilot projects of community policing. In these projects the police and community representatives agreed on three key points: not to involve children with guns; not to have guns or drugs in the open; and to put an end to police corruption. In the first such initiative the chief police officer sacked over half his staff because of bribery and corruption. This initiated the long and complex process of building police credibility in the community.

In June 2001, Viva Rio, the International Action Network on Small Arms and other local NGOs collaborated with the state government of Rio de Janeiro and the military

to destroy 100,000 weapons which had been seized by the police. The weapons were heaped into a 400-square-metre pile and bulldozed in front of a crowd of tens of thousands. The event took the record for the largest weapons stockpile to be destroyed anywhere in the world on a single day. A further 10,000 weapons were destroyed on 9 July 2002 and Viva Rio has campaigned to have 9 July made Small Arms Destruction Day throughout the world.

Find out more about Viva Rio at www.vivario.org.br

AIDS has a woman's face in Africa

Between 13 and 38 per cent of the adult population of the countries of southern Africa are infected with HIV. The majority of those who are living with the disease and its consequences in this region are women and girls. As Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, stated in December 2002, "in Africa, AIDS has a woman's face."

HIV/AIDS becomes prevalent where girls and women are forced to have unprotected sex, where there is widespread economic, social and legal discrimination along with high levels of violence, including sexual violence, against them. This is all too often the case in southern Africa.

In June 2001, at the special session of the UN General Assembly on the global HIV/AIDS crisis, southern African governments committed their countries to eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls to reduce their vulnerability to HIV/AIDS.

Some countries, such as Botswana, Namibia and South Africa, have initiated law and criminal justice reforms and improvements to police training which will, over time, increase women's access to effective remedies in cases of rape, sexual abuse and domestic violence.

South Africa has begun to introduce policies to improve standards of medical and psychological care and treatment, as well as the forensic medical examination of survivors of sexual violence. In 2002 the government began to implement a policy of testing, counselling and provision of post-exposure prophylaxis for rape survivors at risk of HIV infection.

However, these initiatives are at a preliminary stage. The vast majority of victims of rape in South Africa and in the sub-region still do not have access to potentially life-saving treatment.

In Zimbabwe, a profound crisis of political legitimacy and widespread human rights abuses, including politically motivated sexual violence against perceived opponents of the government, has undermined legal, police and health reforms which would have benefited women's access to justice and healthcare.

The vulnerability of women and girls to sexual and domestic violence and the HIV/AIDS pandemic has been exacerbated in Swaziland by continuing legal discrimination and denial of access to social and economic rights. The current constitutional crisis in Swaziland may cause further deterioration in women's access to justice and effective remedies.

Last August, at an AI-organized workshop, civil society activists and healthcare professionals from eight southern and two eastern African countries identified serious problems which prevent survivors of rape from having access to justice and necessary healthcare. These obstacles include discriminatory attitudes, practices and laws, poor

standards of police investigations, as well as low standards of medical care and procedures for the forensic examination of rape survivors.

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Police shoot teenager with Taser in USA

Law enforcement officers continue to use electro-shock weapons despite no independent inquiry into their effects

For Chiquita Hammonds, a 15-year-old student in Miramar, Florida, 3 October 2002 started as a normal day. However, on her bus journey to school the driver stopped and flagged down three police officers to complain that students were being unruly.

Chiquita stepped off the bus. According to the police, the teenager became verbally abusive. When she started walking away, one of the officers grabbed the girl by the wrist and attempted to handcuff her. Chiquita allegedly replied by knocking his sunglasses off. She was then wrestled to the ground while the police officer tried to handcuff her. Another officer sprayed the girl in the face with pepper spray, which the police said did not appear to have an effect. At this point a third officer pulled out his M-26 Taser gun and fired it at the girl's back, striking her with a powerful electric shock.

At least 74 police departments in the USA – many of them in Florida – have introduced the new and more powerful M-range Taser guns in the past two years. The M-26 Taser gun can cause severe pain, as it uses an 18-26 watt electrical signal to fire 50,000 volts of electricity through the target's clothing to override the central nervous system, causing the target to collapse in a heap. Police like Taser guns because they are easy to carry, usable at a distance and capable of immobilizing a target without, allegedly, causing permanent injury.

However, there has been no thorough, independent and impartial evaluation of the medical effects of electro-shock weapons. At least three people are reported to have died in the USA in the past year after being struck with Tasers. Although most such deaths have been attributed to other factors, medical experts have expressed concern about the health risks associated with electro-shock weapons, as well as their potential for abuse.

Chiquita Hammond's case is just one of a number of situations where police appear to have deployed Taser guns in unjustified circumstances. Officers have been known to use Taser guns on people already in custody. In another incident in Miramar, an officer used a Taser gun on a woman who, while already handcuffed and placed in the back of a patrol car, was kicking the windows and spitting on officers. In Pembroke Pines, Florida, police used a Taser gun on a man who wrestled and shoved officers, while refusing to be fingerprinted.

International standards on the use of force by law enforcement officials require that officers apply only the minimum amount of force necessary to obtain a lawful objective, and that all use of force should be proportionate to the threat posed to avoid unwarranted injury or pain. AI is concerned about the use of electro-shock devices and calls on all law enforcement agencies to suspend the use of all electro-shock weapons, including stun guns, stun shields and Tasers, pending the outcome of a vigorous, independent inquiry into the use and effects of such equipment. Such weapons can inflict severe pain without visible marks and therefore could be open to abuse.

The use of these painful non-lethal weapons in the case of an unarmed child constitutes an excessive and disproportionate use of force contrary to the international standards to which the USA is a party.

Somalia peace talks – is there any hope for human rights in the future?

There will be no lasting peace in Somalia if human rights are not at the forefront of the ongoing reconciliation talks in Eldoret, Kenya. At the current time it looks as if human rights are being sidelined.

In a promising start to this 14th attempt to bring peace to the world's longest crisis of state collapse, 17 faction leaders signed a cease-fire agreement on 27 October 2002. Despite protracted debates about representation details, the conference was due to move in January towards discussions of constitutional issues, disarmament, land and property rights, economic reconstruction, conflict resolution and regional and international relations. The final stage would be the formation of a new government to succeed the failed three-year Transitional National Government.

The tragedy of Somalia is that hundreds of thousands of unarmed civilians have died in faction wars since 1991, and earlier through the massive abuses of the former Siad Barre government (1969 to 1991). There has been no accountability for the horrendous and continuing human rights abuses, only an apparent impunity. There is no rule of law and some areas have been frequent fighting zones. Violence and discrimination against other clans or clan divisions, minorities and women are rampant. A fifth of the population has been forced to become refugees in neighbouring countries and elsewhere around the world. Although important efforts have been made locally to try to resolve conflict and generate sustainable livelihoods, most of those who stayed in Somalia have little access to healthcare, education or development. A few have profited from the chaos in collaboration with faction leaders fighting for power and financial gain.

Among Somalia's "leaders" at the Eldoret conference are some who could be prosecuted for crimes against humanity or war crimes, and many others who have been responsible for human rights violations. AI's message to the conference is that there should be no general amnesty agreed among themselves for their human rights abuses.

Civil society groups went to the conference in large numbers and supported this call, but felt increasingly marginalized by the "warlords".

AI delivered an open letter to the conference with the message that a future government – supposedly committed to international human rights standards – would not be acceptable if it contained perpetrators of gross human rights abuses.

Appeals to faction leaders to give priority to protecting human rights in areas they control have gone largely unheeded. No significant human rights commitments for the future appeared in the cease-fire document.

AI is calling on the international community representatives at the conference to provide much greater support for human rights monitoring and protection, and substantially increase assistance for reconstruction and good governance. All sections of Somali society should be empowered to build a new human rights future.

The breakaway self-declared Somaliland Republic in the northwest, which is peaceful in comparison, refused to attend the talks. It held its first multi-party local elections in December after an orderly transition earlier in the year on the death of its President,

Mohamed Ibrahim Egal. Presidential and parliamentary elections are due in early 2003.

Albania: children ill-treated and tortured by police

Ergest Shele, an 11-year-old orphan suspected of theft, was allegedly beaten and burned with cigarettes by a police officer while in detention in Saranda, Albania, in June 2000. Initially the case against the police officer concerned was dropped and it was only reopened after pressure from the Ombudsman. The officer was dismissed but subsequently appointed Chief of Municipal Police in Saranda. Eventually, in July 2002, the officer received a suspended sentence – not for the alleged torture, but for illegally detaining Ergest Shele beyond the legal time limit.

In October and November 2002 monitors from the Children's Human Rights Centre of Albania (CRCA) visited a number of police stations, including those in Shkodër, Vlora, Saranda and Korça, where they interviewed children, aged 14 to 17, in detention. They found that police officers routinely ill-treated children arrested on suspicion of having committed crimes so as to extract confessions from them. They also found that at times the alleged ill-treatment, such as burning with cigarettes, amounted to torture. Signs of physical ill-treatment and symptoms of post-traumatic stress were reportedly clearly visible in some of the children they visited in custody.

The authorities appear unwilling to address this disturbing issue.

Children are frequently detained in pre-trial custody for long periods even if they are accused only of petty crimes. In some cases children have been kept in detention for up to a year before being acquitted of all charges. During detention they have restricted access to their families, are deprived of education and are given inadequate food. The CRCA also found that, with the exception of Korça prison, children were routinely obliged to share prison cells with adult detainees. Three children were alleged to have been sexually abused by adult detainees. The imprisonment of minors with adult detainees is in violation of Albanian law and international obligations.

Conditions of detention at a number of police stations in Albania are so poor as to amount to inhuman or degrading treatment. In October 2002 AI visited detention cells at Vlora police station and noted severe overcrowding, minimal ventilation and natural light, extremely poor hygiene and poor food. There were no recreational or educational activities such as access to reading or writing materials or radio. Some of the detainees were convicted prisoners, who, as required by Albanian law, should have been transferred to prisons. Albanian NGOs have reported similar conditions of detention at other police stations.

In May 2002 detainees in Rrëshen police station in Mirdita district went on a protest hunger strike. According to a press report, 31 detainees, including convicted prisoners, were held in six cells, each intended for two detainees. Prisoners had to sleep in turns on the bare floor.

In view of the deeply disturbing findings of the CRCA, AI is urging the Albanian authorities to institute a special commission to investigate the treatment and condition of child detainees and draw up appropriate recommendations for remedial action. AI reiterates its recommendation that the government should introduce a juvenile justice system which gives due emphasis to the protection of children and of their rights in police custody.

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Death sentences commuted in Saudi Arabia

King Fahd Bin 'Abdul 'Aziz A-Saud of Saudi Arabia took the welcome step of commuting the death sentences of 17 men from the Ismaili community to 10 years in prison in December 2002. The Minister of the Interior announced that 70 others arrested at the same time and given prison sentences would be released after serving only half of their sentences. However, AI is concerned that some or all may be prisoners of conscience.

The circumstances of the trials and the charges brought against the detainees in such cases is always kept secret by the Saudi Arabian government. The 17 were among hundreds of people reportedly arrested in April 2000 following protests by members of the Ismaili religious community in Najran, southwest Saudi Arabia. The protests took place following the closure of their mosque by security forces and the arrest of one person on suspicion of practising “sorcery”, which can carry the death penalty in Saudi Arabia. At least two people were reportedly killed and many others were injured. AI fears that those killed may have been victims of extrajudicial execution or excessive use of force.

Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty for a wide range of offences which, in addition to violent crimes, includes others such as sorcery, certain sexual offences, drug-related offences and apostasy (converting from Islam to another religion). Trials invariably fall short of internationally agreed standards for fairness, as they are held in secret and the rights of defence are severely curtailed, including access to legal counsel. In many cases defendants and their families are not informed of the progress of legal proceedings against them. Defendants may also be convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress, torture or deception. From January 2000 to December 2002 at least 250 people were executed in Saudi Arabia although the true figure may be much higher.

Worldwide appeals

Israel/Occupied Territories

Human rights defender detained

“I decided to work in human rights after seeing the oppression and suffering of many people and after my own experience being tortured and administratively detained for years. I believe human rights is the only way to end the violence between Palestinians and Israelis.”

'Abed al-Rahman al-Ahmar, 2001.

Human rights defender 'Abed al-Rahman al-Ahmar, married and expecting his first child, was arrested on 22 November 2002. At 4am, an Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) combat unit of 20-30 heavily armed troops surrounded the house in Bethlehem where he lives with his family and his wife, Attorney Allegra Pacheco. Allegra Pacheco works for the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees as a Field Legal Officer.

The security forces said they were looking for a brother of 'Abed al-Rahman al-Ahmar but when they did not find him they arrested 'Abed for questioning. He was forced to strip partially before being taken into IDF custody at the Etzion Detention Center. His detention was extended until 3 December 2002. He was held in harsh conditions and was not allowed a daily walk outdoors. He apparently had to sleep on the floor in the cold. He did not receive the medical care and medication he requires

for the severe pain in his back and stomach he suffers from as a result of torture during his previous detentions. Eventually, his wife was allowed to bring him the medicine but it is not clear if she will be allowed to continue this. He was not interrogated.

On 3 December 2002, 'Abed al-Rahman al-Ahmar was placed in administrative detention for six months by a military court. The administrative detention order states that he is detained because he is “a danger to the security of the area” but provides no further information. He is now being held in 'Ofer Detention Center.

'Abed al-Rahman al-Ahmar has previously spent two and a half years in administrative detention, from February 1996 to May 1998, and another year from May 2001 to May 2002. Both times, he was adopted by AI as a prisoner of conscience.

Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of 'Abed al-Rahman al-Ahmar. Call for all necessary medical care to be given to him.

Send appeals to: The Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister, 3 Kaplan Street, PO Box 187, Kiryat Ben Gurion, Jerusalem 91919, Israel. Fax: +972 2 651 2631 e-mail: pm_eng@pmo.gov.il

Haiti

Assassination attempt on radio journalist

An attempt was made on the life of Michèle Montas, a prominent radio journalist and widow of assassinated journalist, Jean Dominique, on 25 December 2002. One of her security guards, Maxime Séide, was killed in the attack at her home in Pétionville, north of Port-au-Prince.

Michèle Montas had just arrived home when she heard the outside gate being slammed shut followed by the sound of gunfire. One of her security guards entered and told her that two armed men had tried to enter the property. When he slammed the gate shut Maxime Séide was trapped outside, where he was killed by the two assailants, who then fled.

Jean Dominique, a prominent radio journalist and long-time democracy and human rights activist, was assassinated by unidentified gunmen in April 2000. Since his death, Michèle Montas has pushed tirelessly for those responsible for his death to be identified and brought to justice. She and staff at Radio Haïti Inter have since received numerous death threats.

The investigation into Jean Dominique's death has been repeatedly obstructed. Judges, police officers and activists associated with it have received threats. The fourth investigating magistrate responsible for the investigation is about to submit his report, upon which any prosecutions will be based. AI believes that this crucial stage in the investigation into Jean Dominique's death places Michèle Montas and Radio Haïti Inter staff at increased risk.

Freedom of expression in Haiti has been increasingly undermined and a number of journalists and human rights defenders have been attacked.

Please write, expressing concern for the safety of Michèle Montas and Radio Haïti Inter staff. Urge the authorities to investigate the attack on Michèle Montas and the killing of Maxime Séide and bring those responsible to justice.

Send appeals to: S.E. Monsieur Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Président de la République ,

Présidence de la République, Palais National, Champ de Mars, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.

Fax: +509 223 0241

Viet Nam

Internet crack-down

Le Chi Quang, a 32-year-old law graduate, is serving a four-year prison sentence after circulating information via the Internet, condemning the government's recent border agreement with China. A dissident and advocate of political reform, he was arrested at an Internet café on 21 February 2002. His trial on 8 November 2002, during which he reportedly appeared unwell, lasted less than four hours.

Le Chi Quang was charged under national security legislation with "gathering information, writing, distributing and keeping documents with distorted contents about the political situation of the Vietnamese State". Other allegations against him were that he "fabricated and spread incorrect news abroad so that reactionary organizations in exile could use it to falsely accuse Viet Nam of suppressing democracy, violating human rights, and thus dishonour the Vietnamese State on the international stage." AI believes that the only reasons for his imprisonment are his dissenting political views and the peaceful exercise of his fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association. He is one of several people arrested during 2002 in a crack-down against dissident voices and use of the Internet.

There are serious concerns for Le Chi Quang's health as it is feared that he is not receiving the medical care he needs for a serious kidney condition. AI considers Le Chi Quang to be a prisoner of conscience detained solely for the expression of his non-violent political opinions.

Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Le Chi Quang.

Send appeals to: Le Hong Anh, Minister of Public Security, Ministry of Public Security, 15 Tran Binh Trong Street, Hoan Kiem District, Ha Noi, Viet Nam. Fax: +844 8260774

News in brief

Australia: AI global conference

The AI Global Human Rights Conference was held in Sydney, Australia, in October 2002, in conjunction with the Gay Games VI Sport and Cultural Festival. The Conference attracted over 300 activists, academics, lawyers, writers and others from more than 20 countries. It raised awareness of the persecution of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people. Highlights included Julian Jayaseela's powerful personal testimony and analysis of sex and torture and Dr Kerry Phelp's discussion of homophobia as a health issue.

The delegates of the Conference passed a resolution to advocate a UN declaration on the right to sexual self-determination.

For more information see: www.amnesty.org.au/hr-conference/index.html

New AI website on un treaty bodies

Information on AI's work with UN treaty bodies can now be accessed online at: www.amnesty.org/treatybodies. The website contains sections on how treaty bodies

work, their main functions and how NGOs can work with them; as well as the countries scheduled to be considered by a treaty body and the status of ratification of the main international human rights treaties. It also has a section on campaign actions.

Recent reports

COLOMBIA: Letter for the attention of Mr Manuel Marulanda, Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia-People's Army (AMR 23 /124/2002)

COLOMBIA: Security at what cost? (AMR 23/132/2002)

USA : Beyond the Law (AMR 51/184/2002)

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YOUR APPEALS MAKE A DIFFERENCE: UPDATES 2002

USA DEATH PENALTY GOOD NEWS

Illinois Governor Ryan pardoned four of the state's death row inmates and commuted the death sentences of all 167 others. Aaron Patterson (far left) was among those pardoned on 10 January just before Governor Ryan left office. Worldwide Appeal May 2002

Joe Ward (second left) no longer faces the death penalty. On 28 January 2002 the charge against him was amended to second-degree murder which does not carry the death penalty. Worldwide Appeal November 2001.

In February 2002, Thomas Miller-El (second right) was given an indefinite stay of execution by the US Supreme Court. Worldwide Appeal December 2001.

The death sentence of Alexander Williams (far right) was commuted to life imprisonment by the Georgia Parole Board in February 2002. Update the Wire April 2002.

“Without your support our father's release would not have been possible” General José Francisco Gallardo (left), a prisoner of conscience detained in **Mexico** for more than eight years, was released in February 2002 after President Vicente Fox ordered that his sentence be reduced to time served. However, his innocence was not acknowledged nor was there any investigation into the misuse of the judicial system that led to his detention. Worldwide Appeal August 1997.

“I could always feel that you were concerned about us. Throughout your work you have reflected the reality of what was happening to the pro-democracy activists.”
Riad-al-Turk on his release

AI welcomed the release of prisoner of conscience Riad al-Turk, aged 72, lawyer and leading opposition activist, from 'Adra Prison in **Syria** following a personal Presidential amnesty on 16 November 2002.

Riad al-Turk had been sentenced to two and a half years in prison on charges of “attempting to change the constitution by illegal means”. Worldwide Appeal January 2002.

Fabián Nsué Nguema Obono was released from prison in **Equatorial Guinea** on 16 October under the terms of an amnesty to commemorate Equatorial Guinea's

independence. A lawyer and opposition politician, he was arrested following the publication on the Internet of a communiqué critical of the government. While in prison he was reportedly tortured severely on several occasions, sustaining broken wrists. On his release Fabián Nsué Nguema Obono thanked AI and said that while in prison he was aware of AI's work on his behalf and believes that it contributed to his release. Worldwide Appeal September 2002.

“Thanks to your work my son Nikolay is alive. Your work is without price. You helped save his life and gave him hope.”

On 14 February 2002, Nikolay Ganiyev had his death sentence commuted in **Uzbekistan**. Nigmatullo Fayzullayev was executed in April and Maxim Strakhov was executed in May 2002. Worldwide Appeal November 2001.

“I really appreciate these friends giving us this help” Wang Junying, wife of Wang Wanxing

A democracy activist confined to a mental hospital in **China** since he spoke out about the Tiananmen Square crack-down, Wang Wanxing received over 800 cards from overseas well-wishers including many AI members. Worldwide Appeal February 2001.

In **Bangladesh**, Bahauddin Nasim was released on bail on 6 January after the High Court declared his detention illegal. Dr Mohiuddin Alamgir was released on bail on 18 September 2002. There were credible reports that both were tortured while in custody. Worldwide Appeal June 2002.

Andrew Klimov was released from a labour colony in **Belarus** on 25 March 2002. A member of the dissolved Belarusian parliament, he had been sentenced to six years in prison. Worldwide Appeal November 2000.

Hassan Bility, a journalist and human rights activist, was released by the government of **Liberia** on 7 December 2002. He had been held in incommunicado detention for six months. After being released he was handed over to US embassy officials and flown out of the country. See the Wire Stop Press September 2002.

In December 2002, Kurdish activist and prisoner of conscience Hussain Daoud was released after two years in prison in **Syria**. He said he had been tortured while in prison. On his release he thanked AI members for all their efforts on his behalf. Worldwide Appeal May 2002.

Please keep sending appeals

Despite some good news in 2002, there has been little or no change in the cases below.

Turkmenistan (January 2002)

Mukhametkuli Aymuradov is still imprisoned and AI is concerned about his continuing poor state of health. In a letter to AI he wrote: “Conditions of imprisonment are extremely harsh ... I am suffering insults, humiliation, hunger, illness, including infectious diseases, absence of essential medication, cold in the winter, exhausting heat in summer. They refuse to accept and pass on food which my wife and children send from home.”

Indonesia (February 2002)

The trial of seven members of the Special Forces Command suspected of involvement in the killing of civilian pro-independence leader Theys Eluay in November 2001 started on 3 January 2002. AI is concerned that the trials are taking place in a military court.

Namibia (February 2002)

Around 126 Caprivi detainees remain in detention without trial for allegedly taking part in attacks on government installations in Katima Mulilo and providing support to the Caprivi Liberation Army in August 1999. Eight have died in custody. A trial date has now been set for February 2003 and they have finally been granted the right to receive state-funded legal representation.

USA (March 2002)

On 10 December, the US Supreme Court dismissed the appeal of Abu-Ali Abdur' Rahman without ruling on its merits, opening up the possibility of a new execution date.

(July 2002) TJ Jones and Toronto Patterson were executed in Texas in August 2002. Both were 17 years old at the time of the crime.

Liberia (March 2002)

The police officer arrested in connection with the killing of students John Kpannah and Morris Johnson in December 2001 was charged with murder following a preliminary hearing which began in April 2002. He has, however, yet to be formally indicted and brought to trial. He remains in detention at Monrovia Central Prison.

Malaysia (April 2002)

In December 2002 the Internal Security Act (ISA) review board recommended that five government critics, Tian Chua, Saari Sungib, Hishamudin Rais, Lokman Nor Adam and Badrul Amin Bahron, detained under the ISA since April 2001, should be released. This recommendation will be forwarded to the King and Home Minister, as the board is not permitted to order the release of detainees. Mohamad Ezam Mohd Nor, originally arrested under the ISA and now imprisoned for two years under the Official Secrets Act, was not included in this recommendation.

Algeria (April 2002)

Mohamed Smain remains at liberty pending a ruling by the Supreme Court on his case. The arbitrary restrictions of having to register with the authorities each week and not being allowed outside his local area were lifted in June 2002.

Libya (May 2002)

The appeal hearing in December against the death sentences imposed on Salem Abu Hanak (above) and Abdullah Ahmed Izzedin (below) was postponed and was due to recommence on 25 January. AI remains concerned that the trial does not conform to international fair trial standards.

France (September 2002)

The Minister of the Interior told AI that the complaint of racial violence and physical assault by police officers made by Karim Latifi had been set aside by the public prosecutor. However, the judicial investigation was continuing.

Togo (October 2002)

Claude Améganvi was due for release on 6 December but the court of appeal increased his sentence to six months imprisonment for the same offence – defamation of character. The end date of his sentence is now 6 February 2003. Please check the AI website for any updates.

Ethiopia (November 2002)

Ziad Hussein Abarusky and 20 others detained with him were transferred to Addis Adaba central prison in September 2002. He and nine others were brought before the court in December but have not been charged.

Ecuador (December 2002)

On 5 December a prison guard was detained and has been charged with extortion and ill-treatment and rape of an adolescent.

Morocco/Western Sahara

(December 2002)

The sentence of Ali-Salem Tamek was confirmed on appeal in October 2002. Other Sahrawi human rights and civil society activists have been imprisoned or harassed over the last year.

Li Wangling, Li Wangyang, China, January

50 allegedly gay men, Egypt, February, update September

Boaventura Simao Vaz, Spain, March

Georgios Panayiotopoulos, Greece, April

Dan Byung-ho, South Korea, May

Ernita binti Wahab, Idris Yusuf and Bakhtiar Usman, Indonesia, June,

Residents of Dragash Voyvoda, Bulgaria, June

Stephan Neisius, Germany, July

Abderrahmane Khelil, Algeria, July

Timur Flores Lopez, Ukraine, August

Anton Cooper, Trinidad and Tobago, August, update October

Tohti Tunyaz, China, August, update November

Alexander Guguneishvili, Georgia, September

Intisar and Kifah 'Ajuri, Israel/Occupied Territories, September, update October

Aset Yakhiaeva, Milana Betirgirieva, Russian Federation, October

Idris Aba'ere, Eritrea, October

Pavel Mozheiko, Nikolai Markevich and Viktor Ivashkevich, Belarus, November

Lawrence Jacobs, USA, November

Binali Ilter, Austria, December

Thongpaseuth Keuakoun, Khamphouvieng Sisaath, Seng-Aloung Phengphanh, Bouavanh Chanhmanivong and Keochay, Laos, December