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BHUTAN

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES/LEBANON

First AI visit to Bhutan

AT the invitation of King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, AI visited Bhutan for the first time in January. The three-member delegation had an audience with the King, met ministers and officials to discuss human rights and visited Samchi District in southern Bhutan. The AI delegation expressed concern about the prolonged detention without charge or trial of suspected government opponents and reports of torture and ill-treatment, deaths in custody and the practice of keeping prisoners in shackles.

During 1991 hundreds of Nepali-speaking people from southern Bhutan were reportedly subjected to arrest, ill-treatment and in some cases torture, including rape, at the hands of the security forces. Government opponents, termed "anti-nationals" by the authorities, are also reported to have deliberately and arbitrarily killed civilians.

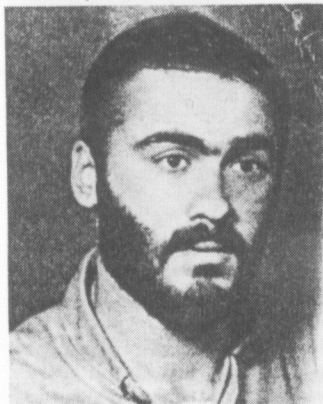
These events have occurred in the context of opposition in southern Bhutan to the government policy of "national integration" and to the carrying out of a national census initiated in 1988, under which many Nepali-speaking people in southern Bhutan have been classified as illegal immigrants. Some of them have been forcibly evicted from their homes and land.

In February King Jigme Singye Wangchuck released 313 political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience Jogen Gazmere and Sushil Pokhrel, who had been detained for over two years without charge or trial. Three other prisoners of conscience — Ratan Gazmere, Bakti Prasad Sharma and Biswanath Chhetri — were released on 17 December, the National Day of Bhutan. AI is continuing to call for the unconditional release of the last remaining known prisoner of conscience, Tek Nath Rizal, who is starting a third year in detention without trial at Wangdi Phodrang Prison. □

'Disappeared' Lebanese found in Israel

Six Lebanese Shi'a Muslims who "disappeared" in Lebanon in 1990 are now known to be in Israeli custody.

The six were taken prisoner in Beirut at the end of 1987 by the Lebanese Forces militia, and held in a detention centre in central Lebanon. They were suspected of belonging to *Hizbullah* (Party of God) and were allegedly tortured. Family visits and correspondence were later allowed through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) until mid-1990, when the Lebanese Forces said that the six had been moved, but would not say where. The families believed they had been taken to Israel, but the Israeli government refused to acknowledge that they were holding the six



Ahmad Jallul "disappeared" in Lebanon in 1990, he is now known to be in Israeli custody

until the ICRC discovered them in Israeli custody and informed their families in January 1992.

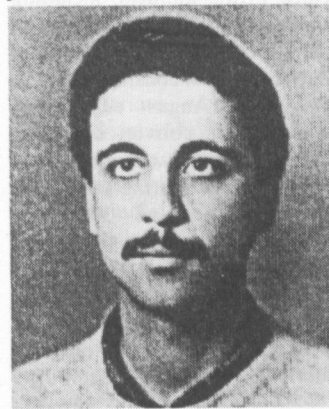
In January AI asked Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to clarify the situation of these detainees, guarantee their safety, and allow them access to the ICRC. AI reiterated its opposition to holding prisoners of conscience, or any political prisoner without a fair trial. It sought assurances that no other detainees were being held secretly in Israel. By mid-February AI had received no response. □

Death in custody

On 4 February Mustafa 'Akkawi, a Palestinian from Jerusalem, died in Hebron from Jerusalem in the custody of the General Security Service (GSS). He had been arrested on 22 January and accused of belonging to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. While in detention he was apparently "shaken and poked", deprived of sleep and held hooded and handcuffed in a freezing hallway. On 3 February he was brought before a judge who noted bruises on his chest and ordered a medical examination. Instead, Mustafa 'Akkawi was taken back to interrogation, where he suffered a heart attack. He had complained of being ill, but a medic failed to detect his condition and did not take him to a doctor. According to a United States

pathologist who participated in the autopsy, Mustafa 'Akkawi had suffered from a severe heart condition, but his heart attack was triggered by the physical and emotional pressures suffered under interrogation, and by the cold. Medical negligence was also said to have contributed to his death. However, the Israeli police exonerated the GSS interrogators from any blame.

AI called for an independent investigation into Mustafa 'Akkawi's death and asked Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to intervene urgently to stop all torture and ill-treatment. It also called for a review of official secret guidelines allowing the use of "a moderate measure of physical pressure" during interrogation. □



Husayn Ahmad "disappeared" in Lebanon in 1990, he is now known to be in Israeli custody

BRAZIL

Mothers of the 'disappeared' threatened

THE mothers of several people who "disappeared" in July 1990 from a farm in Magé, Rio de Janeiro state, have reportedly received death threats. The mothers had publicly denounced the "disappearances" and have actively campaigned for an investigation.

According to a Rio de Janeiro State Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry report, there was evidence of police involvement in

the "disappearances". According to reports, hooded police officers in plain clothes raided the farm in search of certain youths, some of whom were allegedly involved in thefts and drug peddling, and abducted 11 people, including five minors. Their whereabouts remain unknown. There are allegations that in a previous incident police officers attempted to extort money from the families of the

youths who had been detained.

Mothers of the "disappeared" who have received death threats are said to be so afraid for their lives that they gather together at night to try to protect one another. One of the mothers is reported to have said that she does not believe that the kidnappers of their sons will ever be brought to justice because "justice when imparted to the poor is only in the form of punishment". □

Please help!

WORLDWIDE APPEALS

An appeal from you to the authorities can help the victims of human rights violations whose stories are told below.

You can help free a prisoner of conscience or stop torture. Your message can bring liberty to a victim of "disappearance". You may prevent an execution.

The victims are many, the violations wide-ranging. Every appeal counts.

GHANA

Jacob Jabuni Yidana: *a former Chief Superintendent of Police, he served an eight-year prison sentence and is now held in administrative detention without charge or trial, apparently because he implicated the government in the 1982 murders of three High Court judges and a retired army officer. He is a prisoner of conscience.*

Jacob Yidana had reported the results of his investigations to a Special Investigation Board, which concluded that 10 people should be prosecuted for murder, including the head of National Security. Four people were convicted of these murders in 1983 and executed. They had been tried without benefit of defence counsel before the Public Tribunal, a special court which was subject to government influence. Five others who had been implicated in the murders, including the head of National Security, were not prosecuted, allegedly due to political considerations.

Also in August 1983 Jacob Yidana was convicted by the Public Tribunal, without right of appeal, of harbouring one of the leaders of a failed 1982 coup attempt, and sentenced to eight years' imprisonment. Prosecution witnesses were allegedly tortured or subjected to other improper pressure or inducements to fabricate evidence against him.

Jacob Yidana was transferred to administrative detention in July 1988. This prevented his release on parole then or at the end of his sentence in 1991.

In December 1991 a *habeas corpus* application for Jacob Yidana was dismissed and the government issued a Preventive Custody Order retroactively authorizing his detention. The 1982 Preventive Custody Law provides unlimited powers of arbitrary detention without charge or trial "in the interest of national security". The right to challenge such detentions in the courts was removed by the government in 1984. Since 1981 hundreds of people have been detained under this law, some for more than eight years.

■ Please send appeals for the immediate and unconditional release of Jacob Yidana to: Flight-Lieutenant J.J. Rawlings/Chairman, Provisional National Defence Council/ PO Box 1627/ Accra/ Ghana. □

EL SALVADOR

María Cristina Gómez: *a member of a teachers' union, she was killed in San Salvador by a "death squad" on 5 April 1989.*

Three years ago this month, five armed men in civilian clothes forced schoolteacher María Cristina Gómez into a car while her students and other witnesses watched helplessly. Her body, bearing four bullet wounds and acid burns, was discovered two hours later.

María Cristina Gómez was an active member of a teachers' union and a women's organization. Her "death squad"-style murder was attributed by witnesses and human rights groups to members of the Air Force. But the authorities did little

to identify those responsible; eye-witness evidence was never followed up and no autopsy was performed. Her family is still waiting for justice to be done.

María Cristina Gómez is one of countless civilians believed to have been extrajudicially executed since 1980 by the military or "death squads" linked to them. Members of trade unions and other grassroots organizations have been particular targets of killings and "disappearances" by the armed forces, who have accused them of supporting the armed opposition Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN). Most cases have never been investigated and extrajudicial killings have continued with impunity.

In January 1992 a peace accord between the government and the FMLN committed both sides to a series of agreements on human rights. A Truth Commission was established to investigate selected acts of violence committed by both sides since 1980 "whose mark on society makes most urgent the public knowledge of the truth". Those human rights abuses not investigated by the Commission are covered by an amnesty law passed in January, which grants immunity to the perpetrators.

All victims of human rights violations and their relatives have the right to have the full truth about their cases brought to light. Cases such as that of María Cristina Gómez cannot remain uninvestigated and those responsible should be brought to justice in order to prevent such atrocities from recurring.

■ Please send appeals urging that the human rights mechanisms resulting from the peace accord be used to clarify the killing of María Cristina Gómez and to pursue thorough investigations into all allegations of extrajudicial executions to: Procurador Nacional de Derechos Humanos/ Fiscalía General de la República/ San Salvador/El Salvador. □



María Cristina Gómez

KUWAIT

'Umar Shehadeh 'Abdallah Hamdan Abu Shanab: *a 31-year-old hospital worker, following an unfair trial by the Martial Law Court in June 1991, he was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment for "collaboration" during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. He is reportedly being held incommunicado at Kuwait Central Prison.*

'Umar Abu Shanab is a Palestinian with Jordanian nationality who was born in Kuwait. He "disappeared" following his arrest by Kuwaiti armed forces at al-Razi Hospital at the end of February 1991. His fate and whereabouts remained unknown until June 1991, when the Kuwaiti authorities informed his family that he had been convicted of "collaboration" and sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. He was said to have given medicine to Iraqi soldiers

who came to the hospital for treatment. Legal proceedings in Kuwait's collaboration trials were defective in all the critical phases: many defendants were not allowed legal representation and there was no right of appeal to a higher tribunal.

'Umar Abu Shanab was allegedly tortured while in detention and his relatives fear that he continues to be tortured or ill-treated. Although he was allowed family visits following his conviction, he is once again being denied visits

and his relatives are not allowed to communicate with him. His incommunicado detention may place him at risk of further ill-treatment.

■ Please send courteous appeals urging that 'Umar Abu Shanab be given immediate access to his relatives, that an impartial investigation into his alleged torture be set up, and that his case be reviewed to: His Excellency Ahmad al-Hammoud al-Jaber/ Minister of Interior/ Ministry of Interior/ Safat/ Kuwait. □



FOCUS

amnesty
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India: time for change

Torture, rape and deaths in custody

Torture occurs routinely in every Indian state. Many hundreds, if not thousands, of people have been tortured to death during the last decade. Since 1985 AI has recorded the cases of over 400 people who have died after being tortured in custody.

Half of India's people are poor and illiterate, and a quarter are officially recognized as being in need of special protection. They do not receive it. Members of the scheduled castes (*dalits*) and scheduled tribes (*adivasis*), tribal people in northeast India, migrant workers, landless labourers and others who are poor and underprivileged, form the majority of victims of torture, rape and death in custody. Many of them were never charged with any crime. According to *The Telegraph*, an Indian newspaper: "Senior police officials admit that it is only the 'small fry' who usually die in police custody...victims are mainly petty offenders while some are innocent." Other victims were arrested because of their political convictions or detained in areas of armed conflict. In Jammu and Kashmir and the northeast states there is a pattern of rape of women by the army and paramilitary forces during counter-insurgency operations. Elsewhere, rape and ill-treatment of women by the police is widespread.

Many judges, journalists, lawyers, civil libertarians, politicians and police officers themselves have openly expressed concern about the widespread occurrence of torture, rape and death in custody, and have urged the government to halt police violence against detainees. But successive Indian governments have failed to do so.

A major cause of the persistence of widespread torture in India is the official failure to acknowledge that torture occurs at all, let alone that it needs to be



Torture victim Manoj Singh, aged 12, seen after his arrest on suspicion of stealing a purse. His father, Jairam Singh, accompanied the boy to a New Delhi police station and was allegedly tortured to death. A civil liberties team that examined Manoj after he was freed said his body was swollen and bore marks of severe beating vigorously tackled. The practice of torture in custody is so widely known that Indian newspapers

degree methods are still used, despite being illegal, is that the police know full well that they are

of torture and death in custody raised by the United Nations (UN) between 1988 and the end of

"Deaths in police custody are unthinkable in any civilized society.

It is illegal and absolutely sickening"

West Bengal Chief Minister, October 1987

refer to it simply as "the third degree". *The Statesman* commented in August 1989: "the main reason why barbarous third

[a] protected species and that no harm will come to them if the odd prisoner dies in the lock-up." In response to 33 specific allegations

1990, the Indian Government either denied torture occurred; provided the police version of events; claimed the case was

INDIA in profile

Geography: Land area of 3,287,263 square kilometres

Political profile: India is a federal republic, with a bicameral parliament made up of a 245-member Council of States (*Rajya Sabha*) elected for six years and a 542-member House of the People (*Lok Sabha*) elected for five years. Each of India's 25 states have their own governments, except those states under direct rule from New Delhi

Capital: New Delhi

Population: 844,000,000

"under investigation"; or failed to respond even when the courts had found evidence of torture.

The victims or their families find it nearly impossible to obtain redress because they rarely have the information or the resources to do so. Compensation is known to have been paid to the families of only six of the 415 victims of death in custody whose cases AI has documented. Legal proceedings in the case of a student who was tortured to death in 1976 took 14 years to complete; the police finally conceded in 1990 that he had died in custody. Such extraordinary delays are common. They appear to be one more technique used to deny redress to the victims. Archana Guha, a teacher who became paralysed after being beaten, kicked, burned and suspended from a pole, has been pursuing legal action since 1977 in an attempt to bring her torturers to justice.

WHY THE GUILTY GO FREE

Few police officers are ever brought to trial and almost none have been convicted of human rights crimes. As far as AI has been able to establish, police officers were arrested in only 25 of the 415 cases of death in custody which it has documented since 1985; criminal charges were brought in only 52 cases. In only three cases are police officers known to have been convicted of murdering people in their custody. "In India," a former senior official commented, "public demonstrations and loud protests in the legislatures have to be organized before police officers are punished for their illegal acts." Very often the only official action taken in response to evidence of torture is the transfer of the police officers involved. Some police officers have been promoted despite allegations that they tortured prisoners.

Special legislation in force in Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, and Punjab, where armed opposition groups are active, grants the security forces immunity from prosecution for any acts committed while on duty. The police are also protected in law from

prosecution for acts committed while on official duty.

Failure to identify and bring those responsible for torture to justice sends a clear message to the perpetrators that their actions are condoned. The government has claimed that all allegations of torture are investigated. However, successive governments have consistently failed to ensure that proper investigations — a prerequisite for bringing the perpetrators to justice or obtaining compensation for the victims — are held in cases of torture, rape and death in custody. When investigations are held they often appear to be intended more as a response to public pressure than a genuine attempt to establish the truth. AI's extensive research shows that

inquiries by a magistrate, although mandatory, were conducted in fewer than one in four documented cases of death in custody following torture. Most inquiries, if held at all, were conducted by a member of the civil service and not by an independent authority. Reports of inquiries in cases of death in custody are rarely made public.

Police officers of all ranks, and in some cases magistrates, doctors and state officials, have conspired to conceal the truth about torture, rape and death in custody and to shield the guilty. Often the police version of how a victim died is accepted, however implausible it is. Moreover, the police often obstruct inquiries and intimidate witnesses to prevent them from



Torture victim Ram Kumar in the operating theatre of a New Delhi hospital. Ram and Mahinder Kumar were arrested in August 1987 and taken to Vivek Vihar police station, where they were allegedly tortured by 15 police officers who kicked them, rolled heavy rods across their legs, hung them upside down and beat them with sticks. Mahinder Kumar, whose body was said to have been soaked in blood, died the following day. *Indian Express*, RL Chopra

giving evidence. Families are frequently denied access to post-mortem reports.

Faced with the authorities' failure to prosecute, some relatives of people killed in custody have brought private legal actions before the courts. Very few have succeeded.

TORTURE

The Indian security forces use torture both to deter people from political activities, and in revenge for the acts of armed opposition groups. Torture is also routinely used during the interrogation of criminal suspects, even those accused of the most petty offences. In December 1989, a young man was tortured to death by Haryana police officers after local landlords accused him of stealing parts for a water sprinkler.

Children are among the victims of torture. In June 1989, for instance, a group of children from the northwest Delhi slums were arrested for theft. A girl of 13 was stripped naked and beaten; a 12-year-old boy was given electric shocks and beaten with a leather belt; another boy was hanged naked from the ceiling and beaten unconscious. This case, like many others, was only brought to public attention by the work of local civil liberties groups.

Even when the courts conclude that torture has occurred, the victims are often left to bring private suits against their torturers or to seek compensation. But very few private actions against the police succeed. Wilson, a balloon seller, died in the custody of the Delhi police in 1984 and a private action was brought against the police the same year. Eight years later the charges against the accused police officers have still not been drawn up.

Manjit Singh, a 24-year-old police constable, was brought to hospital in Chandigarh, Punjab, gasping for breath. He died the same day, 17 August 1991. Before he died Manjit Singh told doctors that he had been tortured. A medical examination found extensive injuries, but the police claimed they had taken him to hospital because he was suffering from dysentery.

An equally improbable explanation was given by the Maharashtra police for the death of Raju Mohite the day after his release from custody in July 1990. According to his brother, Raju Mohite's "toes had been smashed, his legs were swollen and the entire lower part of his body as well as his back had turned green and black...he told us that the police had repeatedly



Police officers arrest a Congress activist

© Ananda Bazar Patrika

beaten him to make him confess." A post-mortem examination revealed 19 injuries consistent with torture. The police and the state government denied that he had been tortured and claimed that he suffered from jaundice and that his injuries had been caused by a "fall" or "accident". Hundreds, if not thousands, of people have met their deaths in similar circumstances during the last decade.

Political prisoners are often brutally tortured and untold numbers have died as a result. In Jammu and Kashmir detainees have been burned with domestic irons and pierced with electric drills. In Punjab their legs have been wrenched apart and crushed with heavy iron rollers. In Assam electric shocks, often administered with jeep batteries, are apparently the most common form of torture.

RAPE

Rape is a common method of torture. In India it is so routine that a 1988 newspaper headline read: "Another mass rape by Bihar cops". In 1989 the Rajasthan state government admitted that the police had been involved in over 50 rapes in the past few years. According to the Delhi police, 14 cases of rape involving 20 police officers were reported between 1 January and 11 February 1990.

Moti Birua, a 25-year-old tribal

woman, died in a Bihar police station in December 1988. She was taken into custody after her boyfriend was murdered. The police claimed she had escaped and hanged herself. Her family said she had been gang-raped by police officers and had died under torture. A post-mortem examination found no evidence that Moti Birua had hanged herself, but noted serious wounds on her body. Two police officers were suspended and a case of murder was registered. A judicial inquiry was ordered but witnesses were reportedly threatened by the police and none would testify.

Sometimes the police have used rape as a punishment for those who opposed powerful local interests. In May 1988, 23 women were raped by Bihar police officers after villagers refused to work for a contractor for under the minimum wage.

The police and security forces use rape to punish and intimidate women suspected of supporting or sympathizing with the armed opposition and also as a means of indirectly punishing the men from a particular village or area. As an Indian newspaper commented: "the police abuse women to carry out a proxy war against what their menfolk stand for." Women are often raped during counter-insurgency operations. In May 1990 paramilitary soldiers raided five villages in Assam and gang-

raped 14 women. In February 1991 at least 23 women and girls were allegedly raped by soldiers who raided the village of Kunan Poshpora during counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir. One 21-year-old pregnant woman was reportedly raped by seven soldiers. Men living in the village were reportedly tortured during interrogation.

Rape of women by soldiers has been so persistent that the Guwahati High Court, which has jurisdiction over all seven north-east states, ruled in March 1991 that women should no longer be taken to or held at army camps for interrogation. In July 1991 the Supreme Court ordered the army to take special measures in the northeast to protect women from torture or harassment during military operations.

RESPONSIBILITY

By denying that torture occurs and failing to condemn it, by failing to bring torturers to justice, by failing to uphold human rights safeguards, successive Indian governments must bear full responsibility for the persistence of widespread torture, rape and death in custody.

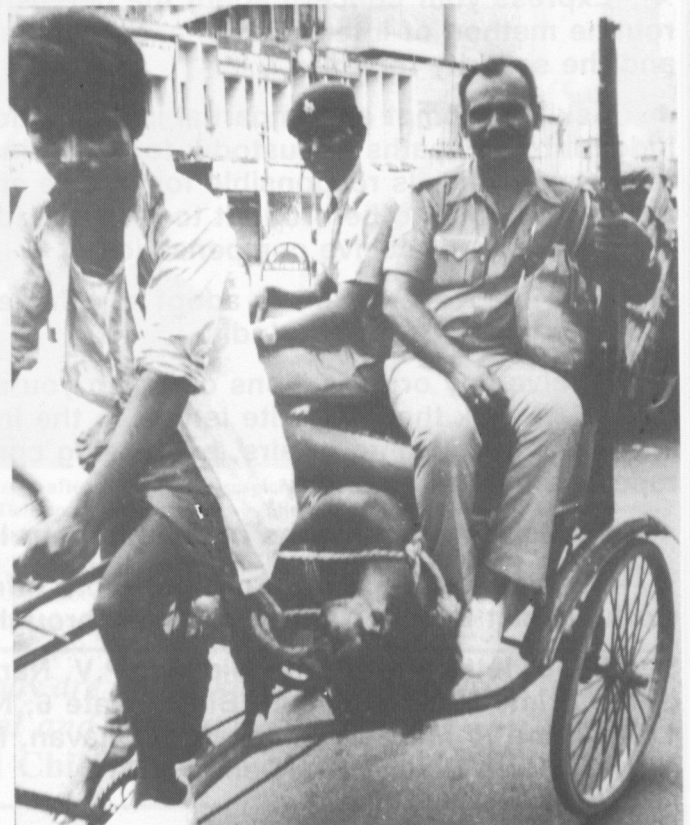
Many Indians have struggled against great odds to expose torture and to demand accountability. The Indian Government, while refusing access to international organizations and failing to



© Ananda Bazar Patrika

Banapati Debbarma, a tribal woman raped by soldiers in Tripura. Tribal women in northeast India are often the victims of human rights violations by the army respond seriously to the international human rights procedures of the UN, has claimed that its legal system, free press and civil liberties organizations are adequate to address human rights violations.

Sadly, this is not the case. In an era where it is widely recognized that human rights are a global concern, those struggling for human rights in India need the active support of the international community.



Gross police negligence caused the death of Mahesh Mahto. The Railway Police at Jamalpur, Bihar, brought him to hospital tied to the footboard of a rickshaw after he had been attacked at the railway station. He died in hospital

© Times of India, Lallan Kumar



Police evict Sikh militants from Delhi's main Sikh shrine. The Indian police, poorly trained and politically partisan, are under pressure to prevent crime. According to a former police inspector general in Tamil Nadu: "when the police are pressurised to deliver results, when they don't have adequate time or manpower to devote to crime investigations, they take shortcuts to achieve their ends. In this process violations of fundamental rights occur"

© Camera Press London, RB Bedi

What you can do

Write to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Home Affairs in India:

- Express your concern about the pervasive use of torture as a routine method of interrogation and intimidation by the police and the security forces.
- Ask for prompt and impartial investigations to be held by a judge into all deaths in custody; for their findings to be made public; for officials responsible for torture and other human rights violations to be brought to justice and for the victims and their families to receive compensation.
- Urge the government to adopt and implement AI's 10-point program to end torture in India.
- Involve any organizations of which you are a member in the campaign. Ask them to write letters to the Indian Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, expressing concern about torture, rape and death in custody.
- Publicize AI's concerns in India in your local community.
- Contact your local AI group for more information about our work against human rights violations throughout the world.

Send your letters to: Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, Office of the Prime Minister, South Block, Gate 6, New Line, New Delhi 110011 and to Minister Shankarrao Chavan, Minister of Home Affairs, North Block, New Delhi 110011

Join Amnesty International!

TEN STEPS TO STOP TORTURE

1. Adopt an official human rights policy
2. Conduct independent investigations into all allegations of torture
3. Implement and strengthen legal safeguards
4. Bring the perpetrators to justice
5. Investigate the causes of torture
6. Provide redress for the victims
7. Provide rehabilitation for the victims
8. Inform detainees of their rights
9. Train the police and the security forces to uphold human rights
10. Strengthen India's international human rights commitments

CAMEROON

Human rights workers detained

FOUR members of the banned human rights organization *Comité d'action populaire pour la liberté et la démocratie* (CAP Liberté), Popular Action Committee for Liberty and Democracy, were arrested in January. Two of them have reportedly been tortured and ill-treated in custody; all four are believed to be prisoners of conscience.

Jean-Michel Nintcheu was arrested on 3 January at his printing works in Douala. Police officers reportedly ransacked the office, destroying printing equipment and taking away leaflets and other printed materials. Two CAP Liberté officials, Emmanuel Wato and Feuneu Feuzing, were also arrested on 3 January. Tafou Martin, a businessman and acting Secretary General of CAP Liberté, was arrested three weeks later.

Jean-Michel Nintcheu and Emmanuel Wato were reportedly beaten severely in police custody. Jean-Michel Nintcheu was initially denied hospital treatment and went on hunger-strike until he was taken to a doctor. At the end of January he was reportedly receiving medical treatment for injuries caused by severe beatings on the soles of his feet. Emmanuel Wato is also reported to have suffered injuries as a result of being beaten.

All four men were held at the First District police station in Douala. None of them has been formally charged, but they have apparently been accused of continuing the activities of a banned organization, and with incitement to violence. They appear to have been detained solely because of their non-violent opposition to the government. □

MALAWI

Prison punishment regime

CRIMINAL prisoners in Malawi are denied food, severely beaten and kept naked as part of a special punishment program introduced in 1983 to deter persistent criminal offenders, AI said in a report published in March.* Many prisoners are believed to have died as a result of this regime.

Under this program, prisoners nearing the end of their sentences are transferred to Nsanje or

TAIWAN

Prisoners of conscience detained

IN 1991 at least a dozen people were arrested for activities supporting the creation of an independent Taiwan state and for rejecting the government's goal of reunification with China. Some of them are prisoners of conscience.

In May five people were arrested for their alleged membership of the banned Association for an Independent Taiwan. In December three of them were

sentenced to prison terms ranging from 18 months to two years.

Kuo Pei-hung, Lee Ying-yuan and Wang Kang-lu, leading members of the United States chapter of the World United Formosans for Independence (WUFI), were arrested between August and October. WUFI's aims include the establishment of an independent Taiwan state and recognition of human rights. AI is concerned

that the three are detained for exercising their right to return to their own country and because of their activities to promote the creation of an independent Taiwan. In the absence of evidence that they used or advocated the use of violence to achieve political change, AI has adopted them as prisoners of conscience and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release. □



On 20 December 1991 Mehdi Zana, a former Kurdish prisoner of conscience who had been held in Turkey, visited AI's International Secretariat, where he met staff and members of AI and other organizations who had campaigned on his behalf. He said: "I came here to convey my thanks to all Amnesty International members. I believe that without the pressure and support of your organization and similar organizations throughout the world, I would not be alive today." Mehdi Zana was arrested shortly after the military coup of 1980, severely tortured for long periods, tried by military and civilian courts on a variety of charges and sentenced to a total of 42 years and nine months' imprisonment. His sentences were subsequently reduced and he was released on 13 April 1991.

ETHIOPIA/ERITREA

The human rights agenda

AN AI delegation visited Ethiopia and Eritrea in December 1991 for the organization's first meetings with the two new governments. It was led by Maître Bacre Waly Ndiaye of Senegal, former Vice-Chairman of AI's International Executive Committee.

In Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa, the three representatives discussed human rights protection with ministers of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and urged fair and early trials for hundreds of members of the former government of Mengistu Haile-Mariam, who have been detained since May 1991 for what officials describe as "human rights crimes and war crimes".

In Asmara, the capital of Eritrea, similar issues concerning Eritrea were discussed with the Head of the Provisional Government, Issaias Afawerki, and other members of the government. The AI delegation visited the former Mariam Gimbi torture centre and a site known as "the field of blood", where thousands of extrajudicial executions were said to have taken place.

The AI representatives met former political prisoners and other people concerned about human rights, including the new non-governmental Ethiopian Human Rights Council. Throughout the previous 17 years AI had been refused access to Ethiopia to raise its concerns with the government or to meet people freely. During this visit the delegates were invited to speak about AI's work in a special television program on Human Rights Day.

For further information see the recent report: *Ethiopia and Eritrea: The Human Rights Agenda* (AI Index: AFR 25/09/91). □

not received any medical treatment. In 1990 a detainee died from an asthma attack. For "security reasons" he had not been allowed to keep his inhaler in his cell. In none of these cases have the authorities held an inquest although inquests are required under Malawian law.

**Malawi: Prison conditions, cruel punishment and detention without trial* (AI Index: AFR 36/03/92). □

RWANDA

Journalists targeted

JEAN-PIERRE Mugabe, editor-in-chief of *Tribun du peuple* newspaper, was sentenced on 12 February to four years' imprisonment by the High Court in Kigali. He had been detained on 2 January and his trial took place on 3 February. He was found guilty of publishing articles and cartoons which were insulting to the Head of State. AI believes he is a prisoner of conscience.

Other journalists have been detained or harassed in Rwanda during the past year. In early December six journalists were arrested and detained for up to a week. The six, who were apparently arrested in connection with articles considered by the authorities to be critical of government officials or policies, were reported to have been beaten in custody before being released uncharged.

These arrests occurred shortly after a military communiqué criticising Rwanda's press and opposition political parties was issued in early December. It accused unnamed newspapers and political parties of taking money from the armed opposition Rwandese Patriotic Front and of promoting regional and ethnic conflict in order to cause a civil war. The communiqué appeared to be aimed at silencing critics of the government. Despite demands from opposition parties, the government is not known to have dissociated itself from the communiqué or to have taken action against the soldiers responsible for it. □

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWSLETTER is published every month in four languages to bring you news of AI's concerns and campaigns worldwide, as well as in-depth reports. Available from Amnesty International (address below)

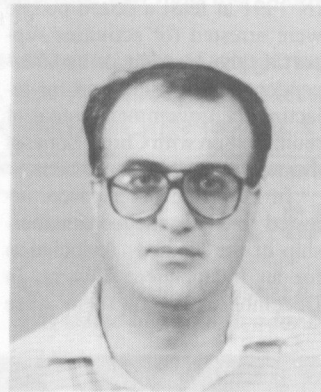


SYRIA

Scores of human rights activists detained

SCORES of human rights activists and members or sympathizers of the prohibited *Hizb al-'Amal al-Shuyu'i*, Party for Communist Action (PCA), have been arrested since December 1991. They are reportedly being held incommunicado and some of them have allegedly been tortured.

Aktham Nu'aysa was reportedly arrested in Lataqiyya on 18 December in connection with a statement issued on 10 December by the Committee for the Defence of Democratic Freedoms and Human Rights in Syria (CDF) which criticized the re-election of President Hafez al-Assad. Aktham Nu'aysa was allegedly subjected to severe torture in custody before being admitted to Harasta Military Hospital. His brother Samir Nu'aysa was reportedly arrested on 18 January, apparently in order to



Aktham Nu'aysa

put pressure on Aktham Nu'aysa to divulge information about the CDF. Five other human rights activists were arrested between 18 December and early January and were allegedly tortured. The seven appeared before a court on 22 February, but it was not

known whether charges were brought against them. Nida' George Shahud and her daughter were reportedly arrested in January in place of the father, who is said to be sought by the authorities in connection with the CDF.

At least seven people were detained in early February in connection with the PCA. Among them were former prisoners of conscience Khadija Dib, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Khayyir and Bahjat Sha'bu. Khadija Dib was detained for 10 days, the others are apparently being held in the Military Interrogation Branch in Damascus.

Under state of emergency regulations in force for nearly 30 years, Syrian security forces can arrest anyone suspected of "endangering security and public order" and detain them indefinitely without charge or trial. □

PERU

Killings and 'disappearances' continue

REPORTS of "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions have continued, despite President Alberto Fujimori's directive, published in September 1991, reiterating "the obligation of all members of the Armed Forces and the National Police to respect nationally and internationally recognized human rights".

At least 14 "disappearances" and nine extrajudicial executions were allegedly carried out by soldiers in the Upper Huallaga

region between August and November 1991. Soldiers stationed at the military base in Aucayacu, Huánuco department, were thought to be responsible for most of the abuses.

Rafael Magallanes Huamán, Lupe Angulo Vela, Isabel Lozano Ríos and Ricardo Saavedra Fernández reportedly "disappeared" after being detained by an army patrol on 15 October. The four were taken to the Aucayacu military barracks. The severely mutilated body of Isabel Lozano was found three days later. Also on 15 October, in two separate incidents, the same army patrol allegedly extrajudicially executed at least seven people, including Abel Santa María, Rafael Ortiz Gonzáles, Ely Sifuentes and Susy de Sifuentes. The violations were reported to a provincial prosecutor and to the office of the Attorney General in the Public Ministry, but AI does not know of any effective investigation having been initiated into these cases.

Between June and October 1991 the *Partido Comunista del Perú* (*Sendero Luminoso*), (PCP) Communist Party of Peru (Shining Path), had reportedly carried out incursions into Aucayacu and nearby hamlets. During these attacks PCP combatants reportedly committed a series of abuses against defenceless civilians. □

CHAD

Amnesty for political prisoners

ON 24 January the Chadian authorities announced the release of all political prisoners, including Maldom Bada Abbas, deputy leader of the ruling party and a government minister at the time of his arrest in 1991. He and several dozen suspected supporters had been accused of attempting to overthrow President Idriss Deby's government in October 1991.

Others released reportedly included about 17 people arrested between 8 and 11 January in the capital, N'Djamena. Armed members of the security police had broken into the premises of some of those they arrested; at least three people were reported to have been shot dead at the time, possibly victims of extrajudicial executions. The authorities said that those arrested were supporters of armed government opponents, but other authoritative sources suggested that they were members of an opposition party, who were arrested on account of their peaceful activities in opposition to the government.

The authorities did not make public the identities of those released, none of whom is known to have been charged with any offence. The authorities have not yet responded to allegations that some prisoners were tortured and that others were secretly and extrajudicially executed. □