



Thousands held without charge or trial in Laotian camps

Thousands of members of the former administration in Laos have now been detained for nearly five years without charge or trial because of their former functions or their beliefs. Most were sent to "re-education" camps in various parts of the country between May and December 1975. Some are now reported to be in poor health due to camp conditions and lack of proper medical care.

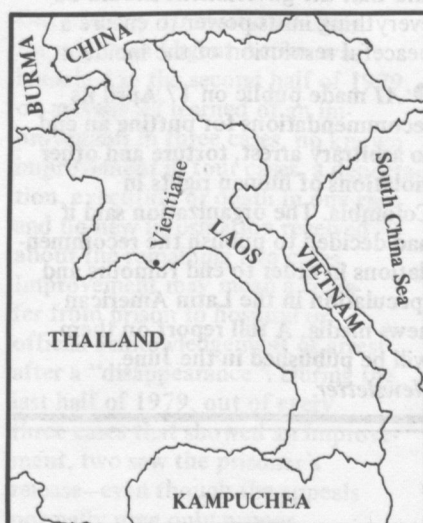
According to former Prime Minister Souvanna PHOUMA, now adviser to the present government, between 10,000 and 15,000 members of the former administration have been sent to "re-education" camps since 1975.

In a 25-page document issued on 16 April *AI* said it was particularly concerned about the following human rights violations in Laos:

- the continuing detention without charge or trial of thousands of former civil servants and professional people who were sent to camps in 1975;
- continuing arrests on political grounds and lack of legal safeguards for those detained on such grounds;
- lack of proper medical care for detainees who need specialized or continued treatment and whose health has deteriorated due to inadequate diet and lack of medicine;
- isolation of detainees from their families. In most cases known to *AI*, detainees in "re-education" camps have now spent more than four years in detention without receiving any family visits.

Padab PANGDARIND, a military doctor by profession, is one of those whose cases are described in the report. He has been detained since October 1975 in a camp in northeast Laos without being charged with any offence. Padab Pangdarind, who is married with six children, is 57 years old and is now reported to suffer from serious muscular and articular pains, sciatica, a lithiasis of the bladder and avitaminosis.

Among other cases described in the report are those of Chansamone VORAVONG, the 49-year-old former Director of the National Geographical Institute of Laos, whose health is said to have deteriorated after four and a half years in a camp; Soukpraseuth SITHIMOLADA, a 47 year-old diplomat,



detained since July 1975; and Tenh TESO, the former Director of the Royal Institute of Law and Administration.

Another case of particular concern to *AI* is that of Khamouane RATA-NAVONG, the former Secretary General of the National Bank of Laos. He has been detained since the summer of 1975 and is believed to be held in Camp 05 in the northeast of Laos. Mr Khamouane, who is now in his mid-50s, is married and has four children. He has not seen his family since 1975. It is reported that he has lost a great deal of weight since his detention and that he suffers from gallstones. He is not believed to have been involved in politics under the former government.

AI has sent repeated appeals and inquiries to the Laotian authorities about people who have been held in the camps or who have been reported missing since their assignment to a camp. In a letter to Prime Minister Kaysone PHOMVIHANE in March 1980 *AI* appealed for the release of all those detained because of their beliefs, political activities or functions under the former government.

Students and teachers killed and tortured in Mali

At least 18 young people, most of them teenagers, were shot, bayoneted or tortured to death and hundreds of others arrested as the Government of Mali tried to crush student unrest in recent months. Large numbers of youths were savagely beaten by police in the streets of Bamako, Mali's capital.

On 21 March the government announced the death in custody of Abdul Karim CAMARA, Secretary General of the National Union of Pupils and Students (*Union Nationale des Elèves et Etudiants du Mali*). The student leader was reported to have been beaten repeatedly and hung by his feet. His family has not been allowed to see the body.

On 25 March *AI* called for an official inquiry into Abdul Karim Camara's death and for assurances about the condition of several teachers arrested earlier. Reports have been received that the teachers, Mamadou DOUKOURE, Victor SY and Tieblé DRAME, were also tortured and that Rokya KOUYATE and other girl pupils were raped and tortured.

Government forces opened fire on demonstrators several times after students and pupils began a series of strikes last November in protest against reorganization of Mali's educational system.

At least 90 youths were said to have been forcibly conscripted into the army without any legal procedure as a form of punishment.

- Radio Mali carried a statement from President Moussa TRAORE on 29 March announcing that all arrested students and teachers would be freed. But several who are said to have been grievously injured under torture may still be missing.

Colombia AI mission submits recommendations

The recommendations of an AI mission that visited Colombia earlier this year have now been submitted to the Colombian Government. AI's Secretary General Martin ENNALS delivered the recommendations to His Excellency Gustavo Balcázar MONZÓN, the Colombian Ambassador in London, on 1 April.

The recommendations, contained in a 44-page document, were drawn up by a three-member mission that went to Colombia from 15 to 31 January 1980. The mission visited 11 prisons in seven cities, two military installations used as jails and two hospitals. It met more than 400 political prisoners and had talks with senior government officials, including President TURBAY Ayala.

AI's International Executive Committee decided at the end of March to forward the mission's recommendations immediately to the government.

The mission visited Colombia to investigate:

- the effects of the state of siege, in force in the country almost without interruption since November 1949, and other emergency measures;

- procedures used to try civilians before summary military courts;
- allegations of torture and steps necessary to prevent it;
- imprisonment and killing of peasants in militarized zones and Indian reservations;
- prolonged detention of trade unionists, medical doctors, lawyers and other professionals, accused of participating in "subversive movements".

In response to the occupation of the Dominican Republic Embassy in Bogotá, AI said its position was that all the hostages should be released immediately and that the government should do everything in its power to ensure a peaceful resolution of the incident.

● **AI made public on 17 April its recommendations for putting an end to arbitrary arrest, torture and other violations of human rights in Colombia. The organization said it had decided to publish the recommendations in order to end rumours and speculation in the Latin American news media. A full report on them will be published in the June Newsletter.**

Bangladesh Political arrests continue after general amnesty declared

Despite a general amnesty of 793 prisoners declared by the government on 25 March, arrests of political prisoners continue to take place in Bangladesh. It is not certain whether the amnesty applies to any of the 1,000 political prisoners estimated to have been convicted by special military courts.

AI wrote to the Minister of Home Affairs on 3 April to inquire about reports of the arrest of 25 members of the Bangladesh Communist Party in Dacca, Sylhet and Dinajpur on 1 April. In a message to President Ziaur RAHMAN on 27 March AI congratulated the government on its announcement of a general amnesty and urged that all political prisoners convicted by special military courts be granted new trials before ordinary civil courts. AI said they should be released pending retrial.

In a report issued in 1978, AI described the trials of civilians before the military courts as falling "far short of international standards".

Some 3,000 prisoners staged a hunger-strike in mid-March to draw attention to the situation and 20 were reported to have been transferred to hospital as a result.

Among the five Bangladesh politicians released from prison earlier in the month was former President Khonakar Mushtaque AHMED. Those who remain in prison include many members of a political party banned in 1977, the *Jatiyo Samajtantrik Dal*.

AI also expressed its concern for political prisoners held without trial under Bangladesh's Special Powers Act. It noted that some had been held for six years.

Ethiopia Prisoners identified

The names of 14 prominent long-term political prisoners who "disappeared" in July 1979 have now been made public by AI. Fears have been expressed for their lives.

"We have now decided to publish their names in the hope that international publicity may protect them, if they are still alive," an AI representative said on 22 April.

Representatives of the country's Provisional Military Government have said they were transferred to other prisons, but have not said where.

One of the missing is *Abuna* TEWOFLOS, former Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, who was deposed and detained in 1976.

Eight were prominent under Emperor HAILE SELASSIE's government and have been detained since 1974: Tefera Worq KIDANE WOLDE, 78, the Emperor's private secretary; Yohannes KIDANE MARIAM, 48, Minister of State in the Imperial Court; Kassa WOLDE MARIAM, 45, Minister of Agriculture and former President of the then Haile Selassie (now Addis Ababa) University; Haregot ABAYE, 70, Mayor of Asmara; Abebe KEBEDE, 48, Director of the Haile Selassie Foundation; Seifu MEHETEME SELASSIE, 53, Minister of Education; Assefa DEFAYE, Director of the Awash Valley Development Project; Kifle ENQO SELASSIE.

Others were officials of the All Ethiopia Socialist Movement (MEISONNE) which formed the political arm of the new military government. In August 1977 it opposed the military rulers and its leaders were killed or imprisoned. The five "disappeared" are: Haile FIDA, Chairman of the Central Committee; Dr Negist ADANE, head of the women's organization; Desta TADESSE, former Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Culture and Sports; Kongit KEBEDE, a women's organization official; Hailu GERBABA.

Fears for the lives of those named were first raised when food brought in daily for them was turned back by prison authorities. Such refusal of food in previous cases has meant that prisoners had been killed.

There is also no reliable information on the whereabouts of Reverend Gudina TUMSA, head of the Ethiopian Evangelical Mekane Yesus Church (an affiliate of the Lutheran World Federation), who was abducted in July 1979 by armed men believed to be government security agents. His wife was detained in early February 1980.

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.

Alfonso SILVA Quintana and María Saturnina ALMADA de Silva—Paraguay

A Paraguayan couple who attempted to bring humanitarian aid to political detainees in their country are now entering their 12th year in detention.

Alfonso SILVA, a 49-year-old accountant, and his 51-year-old wife, María Saturnina ALMADA de Silva, have been in prison since 28 January 1968, except for an interval of 15 months.

During those 12 years two of their children have died.

For the first 10 years the couple were held at various police stations and prisons without being charged. Eventually they were released in March 1978.

Señora Almada then began making prison visits to see Severo Acosta Aranda, a prisoner of conscience adopted by *AI* who was still in detention after his arrest 14 years earlier. She was arrested, however, in May 1979 for bringing food to the prisoners. Her husband was arrested with her for visiting Sr. Severo Acosta's parents at their village home.

Both were charged in June 1979 but the judge dropped the charges in October, ordering instead that they be held in preventive detention.

Sr. Silva is in the *Penitenciarío Nacional de Tacumbú* in Asunción, a prison built to house 500 prisoners, but now reported to hold 1,500 common-law offenders.

Sra. Almada is held at the *Instituto del Buen Pastor* in Asunción, a prison staffed by nuns.

They are visited by Sr. Silva's 80-year-old father who travels from the north of the country to see them.

Please write courteously worded letters appealing for the immediate release of Alfonso Silva Quintana and María Saturnina Almada de Silva to: Exmo. Sr. Presidente de la República del Paraguay, General de Ejército Alfredo Stroessner, Casa de Gobierno, Asunción, Paraguay. Send a copy to the Paraguayan Ambassador to your country.

Albert CERNY—Czechoslovakia

A signatory of the unofficial Czechoslovak human rights movement, Charter 77, is serving a 3½ year prison term for "subversion".

Albert CERNY, a 43-year-old former actor, was sentenced to 3½ years' imprisonment on 27 November 1979 by the Regional Court in Brno for "subversion". He appealed against the verdict. On 27 March 1980 the Supreme Court of the CSR upheld his sentence.

A supporter of the human rights movement, Charter 77, Mr Cerny was arrested on 26 March 1979 at which time he was working as a driver for the Czechoslovak Red Cross in Brno.

The prosecution charged Mr Cerny with possessing and distributing "anti-socialist" writings and with being a member of an "illegal organization", the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Persecuted, known in Czechoslovakia as VONS. VONS, an off-shoot of Charter 77, was established in April 1978 to monitor violations of human rights in Czechoslovakia. The prosecution charged that in all his activities he had been motivated by hostility towards socialism.

During his trial Mr Cerny described himself as an independent socialist and denied that he acted out of hostility towards socialism. He stated that he considered VONS "a legal form of appeal to the highest state organs" and that copying of books of blacklisted authors was "a necessary form of citizen's self-help".

Mr Cerny is married and has two children. He is detained in Brno-Bohunice prison.

Please send courteously worded letters appealing for the immediate release of Albert Cerny to: Dr Gustav Husak, President of the CSSR, Praha-Hrad, CSSR.

FU Yuehua—People's Republic of China

A 34-year-old woman municipal worker, who became a human rights activist after trying for years to call

attention to her own grievances, is serving a two-year sentence for "violating public order" in China.

FU Yuehua lost her job in 1972 after accusing a local Communist Party branch secretary of raping her. While petitioning for her case to be re-examined, she met other petitioners, mainly peasants who came to Peking to present personal grievances. She wrote wall posters supporting demands for human rights and democratic reforms which began to be aired in Peking in late 1978. She took part in a demonstration by peasants in the capital on 14 January 1979, and was arrested by plainclothes police on 18 January.

An unofficial report said she was badly beaten by police after her arrest and went on a hunger-strike in protest. This was before her official date of arrest, given as 3 April 1979. In China, this date normally marks the time at which formal charges are made. Fu Yuehua was tried on 17 October 1979, charged with "organizing disturbances which violated public order" and "libel". The latter charge, which referred to her accusation of rape, was dropped, apparently as a result of evidence which she brought forward at the trial. It was officially reported on 24 December that she had been sentenced to two years' imprisonment on the charge of violating public order.

Please send courteously worded appeals for the immediate release of Fu Yuehua to: His Excellency Hua Guofeng, Prime Minister, Peking, People's Republic of China.

NEWS OF PAST CAMPAIGNS

Dimiter KOLEV, the Bulgarian prisoner suffering from partial paralysis (January *Prisoners of the Month Campaign*), is reported to have been moved from Buhovo prison to a hospital in a detention centre.

Dr Victor MARCHESINI, the Argentinian lawyer held without charge or trial (January *Prisoners of the Month Campaign*), has been released.

In the first four years after *AI* published the first edition of its report, *Prisoners of Conscience in the USSR: Their Treatment and Conditions*, it learned of more than 400 people newly imprisoned or similarly restricted for exercising fundamental human rights.

That total does not include those already imprisoned in 1975 or scores of new cases in recent months. At the end of April *AI* published a revised and updated version of the report, including much recent evidence of the abuse of psychiatry for political purposes and an analysis of Soviet law as applied to non-conformists. The following article summarizes some of the main elements of the 200-page report.

Prisoners of conscience in the USSR

Imprisoned dissenters in the Soviet Union are subjected to punishment by hunger, forced labour and the abuse of psychiatry.

Punishment may take the form of sentence to a labour camp or prison, confinement to a psychiatric hospital where the inmate has even fewer rights than in prison, exile to a remote part of the Soviet Union or banishment from the "offender's" home area.

Among those treated in this way are people punished for criticizing official policies, trying to defend the rights of others, complaining to the authorities about individual grievances, holding unauthorized religious meetings, trying to leave the country, and even, in the case of Crimean Tartars, trying to return to their homeland within the USSR. A major category of political prisoners is made up of activists for the rights of national and ethnic groups.

Amnesty International still has not heard of a single case in which a Soviet court has acquitted anyone charged with a political or religious offence.

The constitution and laws of the USSR include restrictions on freedom of speech, association, religion and movement.

The criminal code for each of the country's 15 constituent republics limits human rights in the interest of banning speech or acts judged to be "anti-Soviet" or "anti-social".

Key articles restricting freedom of expression ban "agitation and propaganda" containing "slandering fabrications" or "intended to weaken the Soviet regime", and association for the purpose of committing "especially dangerous crimes against the state". Conviction carries a penalty of up to 12 years' imprisonment and internal exile for a first offender, and up to 15 years' for a second offence.

Circulation of "fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system" carries a maximum penalty of three years' imprisonment.

AI knows of well over 100 people convicted for such offences in the four years after June 1975. People who disseminate information about human rights violations are especially liable to these charges, since such information is officially regarded as slanderous.

The arrest of dissenters is often the culmination of official efforts to intimidate them through other means, such as police surveillance, house searches, questioning, or dismissal from employment.



Anatoly Koplík is one of many dissident Baptists imprisoned in the Soviet Union. In 1977 his mother travelled thousands of kilometres from the Ukraine to visit him in his labour camp near the Soviet-Chinese border. The visit was scheduled to last three days, but was cut short after one day when guards discovered she had slipped him a small quantity of garlic and onion to take back to his barracks.

When they are charged under criminal law, it is common for prisoners of conscience to be held for a year or more before trial, although the law sets a nine-month limit on pre-trial detention. They are held in "investigation-isolation" prisons. Lights burn in the cells 24 hours a day; windows are painted over or blocked up; some cells have flush toilets but most only have slop buckets. Dissenters are not usually permitted visits during pre-trial detention. The accused normally has the right to meet a lawyer only when the preliminary investigation is declared complete—days or at best a few weeks before the trial.

Only lawyers listed by the KGB (Committee of State Security) as having clearance can defend in cases involving charges such as "treason" and "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". Lawyers who defend energetically in political cases are likely to have their names struck off the list.

Prisoners of conscience regard a guilty verdict as inevitable once a case is brought to trial. Most trials are technically open, but the courtroom is normally packed with specially invited groups. Friends and relatives of the accused are usually barred.

The maximum term of imprisonment under Soviet law is now 15 years, followed by five years' exile,

although prisoners can be convicted of offences committed during their sentence and required to serve additional terms.

Some prisoners of conscience, such as Ukrainian Danylo Shumuk, have been imprisoned for more than 30 years as a result of repeated sentences.

Most prisoners are sentenced to one of four types of institution. The most severe is a *prison*: it is fairly rare for prisoners of conscience to be sent to these. The next most severe is a *corrective labour colony with special regime*, followed by *strict, reinforced* and *ordinary regime* colonies.

Most prisoners of conscience known to Amnesty International have been sentenced to strict or ordinary regime labour colonies.

Another frequently imposed punishment is *exile* to a specified locality for a maximum of five years. It is common for prisoners of conscience to be sentenced to imprisonment followed by a term of exile.

Prisoners are transported to their place of imprisonment in overcrowded, inadequately ventilated vans and special railway wagons. In the "Stolypin wagons" used for rail transport, as many as 30 people may be packed into a compartment meant for eight or 10, for three or four days at a time. Prisoners in transport often suffer from inadequate food and water.

Most prisoners of conscience end up in corrective labour colonies (camps), surrounded by barbed wire, and walls with watch-towers, guarded by armed men and dogs.

Prisoners in the Mordovian special regime camp live three to five to a cell. Inmates in the three other categories of labour camp live in barrack-type accommodation, as many as 200 to a barrack, sleeping in double bunk beds.

Prisoners complain of overcrowding and the noise which results, lack of ventilation and inadequate heating in winter. Prisoners are forbidden to use more than one blanket. Prisoners must wear official uniforms (black or striped); there are reports of prisoners of conscience being punished for wearing additional clothing in winter or taking off part of the uniform in summer.

Hunger is a permanent feature of camp life. The standard diet consisting in large part of rye bread, with limited amounts of meat, fish and other basic foods, provides some 2,500 calories and 65 grams of protein. But hunger is increased as punishment for infractions of prison discipline, such

as "deliberate" or "malicious" failure to fulfil work targets. Prisoners in punishment cells get only 1,300 to 1,400 calories and some 38 grams of protein every other day, with only bread, hot water and salt on intervening days. If they continue to work, they get the 1,300 to 1,400 calorie diet every day.

According to international health standards, a man working very actively requires between 3,100 and 3,900 calories a day, and a protein intake of one gram for every kilo of body weight.

Former prisoner Mikhail Shtern said of the "standard" diet: "The food was like animal fodder. No vegetables or fruit for years on end, and microscopic portions of meat."

The illnesses caused by this kind of diet are often compounded by inadequate medical care. Prisoners suffering from chronic hunger and straining to meet output targets in the heavy labour often assigned to them are particularly vulnerable to accidents. Lack of investment in safety equipment increases the danger in such typical tasks as quarrying or using wood or metal cutting machines.

Cases are reported of acutely ill prisoners being left to finish terms in the punishment cells before being given treatment. There are many reports that prisoners with tuberculosis and other infectious diseases are not adequately isolated from other prisoners.

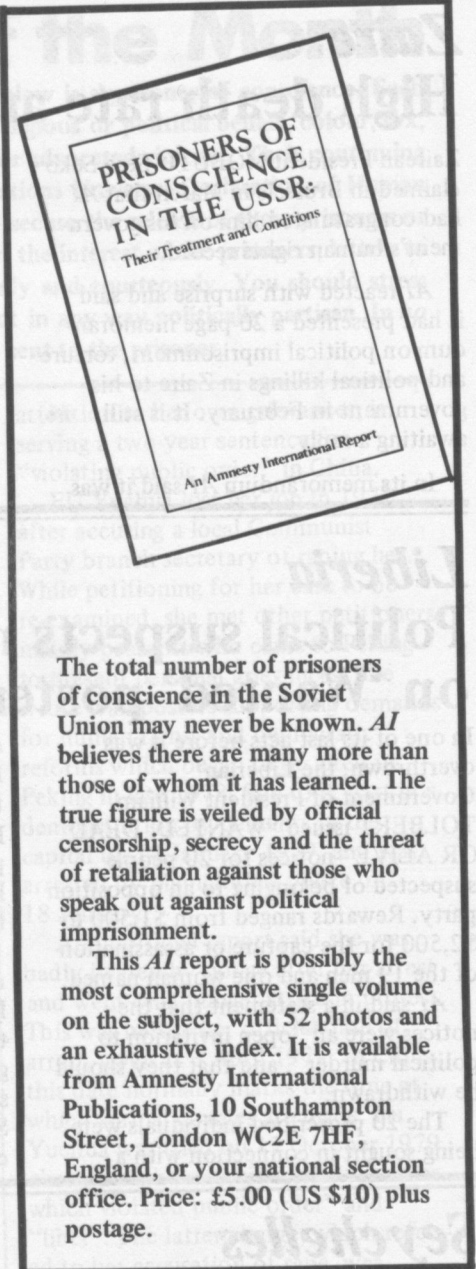
Much new evidence has come to light of the forcible confinement of dissenters to psychiatric hospitals.

Among the grounds for such confinement have been criticizing the government or trying to bring complaints to the authorities, trying to leave the country, distributing leaflets said to contain "anti-Soviet slander", and staging unauthorized public demonstrations.

In diagnosing dissenters, official psychiatrists have often followed a vague definition of schizophrenia, which holds that there need be no external symptoms.

An officially appointed psychiatrist is quoted as saying in court, in the case of a woman accused of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda": "The absence of symptoms of an illness cannot prove the absence of the illness itself."

Once confined, prisoners of conscience are treated indiscriminately and routinely with powerful drugs which have dangerous side effects when used this way. These drugs, including potent tranquillizers, are administered as punishment and as a



The total number of prisoners of conscience in the Soviet Union may never be known. *AI* believes there are many more than those of whom it has learned. The true figure is veiled by official censorship, secrecy and the threat of retaliation against those who speak out against political imprisonment.

This *AI* report is possibly the most comprehensive single volume on the subject, with 52 photos and an exhaustive index. It is available from Amnesty International Publications, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England, or your national section office. Price: £5.00 (US \$10) plus postage.

form of pressure on dissenters to renounce their views. Insulin shock treatment is one of these punishments.

Much of the harshest treatment is inflicted on those sent to special psychiatric hospitals, where some prisoners have been known to have been kept for decades. These hospitals are under the direct authority of the Internal Affairs Ministry rather than the health authorities. Criminal prisoners are recruited to serve as orderlies in them. "By all accounts," says the report, "not only the criminal orderlies but also administrative and medical staff have ferociously beaten helpless and non-violent inmates."

More than 100 people are known to have been forcibly confined to psychiatric hospitals for exercising human rights in the four years covered by the report, joining many others whose confinement began earlier.

Zaire

High death rate among detainees

Zairean President MOBUTU Sese Seko claimed in Brussels in March that *AI* had congratulated him on his government's human rights record.

AI reacted with surprise and said it had presented a 20-page memorandum on political imprisonment, torture and political killings in Zaire to his government in February. It is still awaiting a reply.

In its memorandum *AI* said it was

gravely concerned about the high death rate in the country's prisons where political detainees are held without charge or trial in appalling conditions. More than 100 prisoners are known to die each year from starvation, disease and torture.

AI urged President Mobutu to end these abuses and to release all prisoners of conscience, both those who have been convicted and those held without trial.

Liberia

Political suspects named on 'Wanted' posters

In one of its last acts before it was overthrown, the Liberian Government of President William TOLBERT issued "WANTED: DEAD OR ALIVE" notices for 20 people suspected of belonging to an opposition party. Rewards ranged from \$1,500 to \$2,500 for the capture or assassination of the 19 men and one woman named.

AI said in a statement that the notices were an "open invitation to political murder", and that they should be withdrawn.

The 20 proscribed individuals were being sought in connection with a

crackdown on the People's Progressive Party (PPP), the first opposition party that had been permitted to function in Liberia since the late 1950s. The party had been recognized in December last year, but was banned three months later on 28 March.

After President Tolbert's government was overthrown on 12 April, all PPP detainees were freed and four of them were named to the new government. President Tolbert was shot dead during the coup. Army Sergeant Samuel K. DOE, who led the coup, became the new Head of State.

Paraguay

Peasants slain, hundreds held

Paraguayan security forces have killed more than 20 peasants and arrested several hundred in raids in several parts of the country.

Some 300 peasants have been taken to a notorious police torture centre called *Investigaciones* in the capital, Asunción, and an unknown number are held in the towns of Villarrica and Paraguari. Among the prisoners is a wounded 12-year-old girl, Apolonia FLORES.

The raids, launched in March, appeared to be a renewal of repressive campaigns which have followed attempts by the peasants to organize themselves.

The raids against peasant communities were carried out by a force estimated at 5,000 men, made up of soldiers, militia, and local supporters of the government, according to reliable reports.

The operation was launched after a small group of armed peasants stopped a bus and demanded to be taken to Asunción to draw attention to the conditions in which they lived and to the death of several children from malnutrition.

Among those killed or imprisoned were peasant leaders who had previously been held without trial and tortured during earlier crackdowns on the now-outlawed Agrarian Leagues, which tried with Roman Catholic Church backing to organize peasants in defence of their land and economic rights.

A staff member of Paraguay's Ecumenical Church Committee, Cosme BENITEZ, who tried to visit one of the raided communities on 12 March, was barred from it and was arrested two days later.

The Paraguayan Government's only mention of the raids has been an official statement that 10 people were killed in an alleged gun-battle with government forces. The Paraguayan press has been silent on the raids except for this statement, but Brazilian newspapers have published reports on them.

In a telegram to Paraguayan President Alfredo STROESSNER *AI* has asked for a public explanation of the killings and arrests, which have been reported by several different sources. It has also asked that the authorities turn over the bodies to the peasants' families for religious burial.

Seychelles

Mission meets government

An *AI* mission visited Seychelles from 1 to 4 March 1980 at the government's invitation to discuss the recent detentions and inspect conditions of detainees (February Newsletter).

AI's delegate, Mr S. Amos WAKO, Secretary General of the African Bar Association, had meetings with President Albert RENE and other government officials, and visited Union

Vale prison in the capital, Victoria. He interviewed in private seven of the 18 people still detained, including two in hospital. Shortly after his visit, five of them, including the two undergoing hospital treatment, were freed.

AI is now preparing a memorandum to the government setting out the findings of the mission and *AI*'s continuing concerns.

Vietnam

News of releases

Following the visit of an *AI* mission to Vietnam in December 1979, news has been received of the release of several prisoners whose cases had been taken up by *AI*. Among those freed from "re-education" camps are the writers DOAN Quoc Sy (October 1978 *Campaign for Prisoners of the Month*)

and NGUYEN Dinh Toan, poet and novelist. Also released were 79-year-old TRINH Quang Quy, a former senator and trade unionist. Former military personnel released include NGUYEN Xuan Son, a 42-year-old army major, and 48-year-old DANG Ngoc Lan, a former lieutenant colonel. Most had been held over four years without formal charge or trial.



amnesty international
campaign for the abolition of torture

URGENT ACTION

Global network acts to protect prisoners

A police colonel orders the release of a South African barrister who has been held incommunicado without charge or trial.

Three little girls are handed over by Argentinian security forces to relatives after being held secretly in custody with their mother.

A Yugoslav professor, imprisoned on political charges, is granted a suspension of sentence to enable him to receive medical treatment.

Each of these victims, now spared in some way the excesses of political imprisonment, was the object of action by *AI* members.

In more than 40 nations volunteers are ready to send telegrams or express letters on behalf of people in other countries who face torture, execution or other human rights abuses.

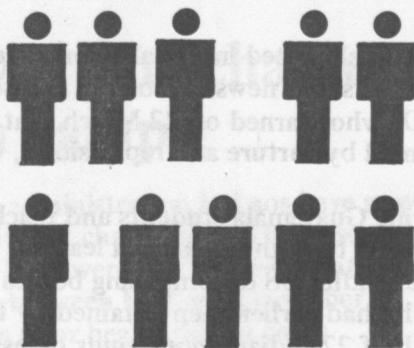
Special appeals, known as Urgent Actions, are initiated by *AI*'s International Secretariat. They cover cases of political prisoners needing medical care, those under sentence of death or who have "disappeared" and victims or potential victims of torture.

Last year the Urgent Actions network handled 248 appeals on behalf of political prisoners in 56 countries.

Urgent Actions are relayed from London to coordinators in *AI*'s national sections. Within hours of notification from London, letters and telegrams are on their way to the target country.

Last year's appeals covered more than 850 individual prisoners and hundreds of others seized in mass arrests or held in prolonged detention without charge or trial.

Among those on whose behalf *AI* acted was 42-year-old Fikile BAM, a South African barrister, arrested in August 1979 in the Transkei, declared



Out of every 10 individual cases for which an Urgent Action was launched in the second half of 1979, on average *AI* learned of an improvement in three cases, no known improvement in four cases, a deportation, execution or death in one case and no new information received about the remaining two cases. Improvement may mean a transfer from prison to hospital or official acknowledgement of arrest after a "disappearance". During the last half of 1979, out of every three cases that showed an improvement, two saw the prisoner's release—even though the appeals normally urge only proper treatment.

"independent" by the South African Government in October 1976.

His mother and lawyer were consistently refused permission to see him and fears grew about what might be happening to him in custody.

AI Urgent Action volunteers urged the authorities to charge the prisoner or release him, to reveal his place of detention and allow immediate access to him.

Two weeks later the security police colonel summoned Mr Bam to his office and called him a "social scourge". He then showed him numerous telegrams and other messages of concern from many parts of the world and informed him that he was to be released immediately.

In many other cases, however, *AI* has never learned the outcome. Or it has learned, as it did in 25 cases from July to December 1979, that, despite its efforts, the victims died in custody, were executed or deported to face political imprisonment in another country.

appeal

Rights activist returned to Soviet mental hospital

Arvidas CHEKHANAVICHIOUS, a 31-year-old Lithuanian human rights campaigner, was arrested for the third time on 9 November 1979 and again forcibly confined to a special psychiatric hospital—the severest form of psychiatric confinement in the Soviet Union.

Mr Chekhanavichius was first arrested in Kaunas, Lithuania, in 1973 after poems and tape-recordings of foreign radio broadcasts had been confiscated during a search of his home. After being charged with "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda", he was sent for psychiatric examination and diagnosed as "schizophrenic and psychopathic". He was then forcibly confined in psychiatric hospitals for six years until his release in January 1979.

On 12 June 1979 Mr Chekhanavichius was again confined in a psychiatric hospital, apparently for sending an account of his previous confinement to the unofficial Moscow-based Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes in the USSR. Powerful neuroleptic drugs were forcibly administered to him during his confinement which lasted until August 1979.

Mr Chekhanavichius was re-arrested on 9 November, ostensibly for installing a telephone illegally several years earlier in his apartment.

He was again sent for psychiatric examination and declared mentally ill and "socially dangerous". On 4 January 1980 a court ordered his compulsory hospitalization in a special psychiatric hospital. He is reported to have been sent to the Chernyakhovsk Special Psychiatric Hospital.

Please send courteously worded letters asking for details of Arvidas Chekhanavichius' treatment and inquiring when he will be released to: RSFSR, 238100 Kaliningradskaya oblast, g. Chernyakhovsk, Spetsialnaya Psikhiatricheskaya Bolnitsa, Uchr OM 216/st 2, Nachalniku, Svyatskomu F.A.

Archbishop 'martyred' for human rights

Death threats and political killings shake Central American nations

Hundreds of peasants have been killed and abducted in El Salvador since the government announced a program of land reform, imposed a state of siege, news censorship and sent troops into action in rural areas.

Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo ROMERO, who warned on 22 March that "terror is rampant in the countryside . . . the agrarian reform is . . . accompanied by torture and repression", was assassinated two days later as he said Mass.

Throughout the month in neighbouring Guatemala students and teachers at the University of San Carlos were victims of killings and abductions that took the lives of at least 20 students and teachers.

Outside Guatemala City a mass grave holding 38 decomposing bodies was unearthed in a deep ravine. One of the dead was Liliana NEGREROS who had earlier been detained by the national police as she took part in a funeral procession mourning the death of 22 Indian *campesinos* (peasant farmers) who died in the tragedy at the Spanish Embassy in Guatemala City in February (*March Newsletter*).

In a statement issued on 17 March *AI* called on the Salvadorean Government to halt the campaign of murder and abduction against peasants.

Troops operating in open coordination with the paramilitary organization ORDEN have attacked villages supporting opposition peasant unions, the Christian Federation of Salvadorean Peasants and the Union of Rural Workers. Land seized has been handed over to members of ORDEN, a movement organized by the country's previous government to use clandestine "guerrilla-style" terror against government opponents.

In Chalatenango Department, *AI* was told, a circle of fire was lit around a village to prevent local people escaping: troops then entered the village killing some 40 people and abducting many others.

AI expressed its concern to the United States Government about reports of stepped-up aid to El Salvador's internal security forces, including military advisers, coinciding with the campaign of repression.

Under present conditions in the country, an *AI* representative said, the nature of the aid, believed to centre on the military's police and public order operations, could be expected to lead to further human rights violations.

The repression in El Salvador included a bomb attack against the unofficial Human Rights Commission and police confiscation of its documents and a bomb attack on the Archbishop's radio station YSAX.

AI warned that the Archbishop had received fresh death threats. His name had moved to the top of the "white warrior's union" death list.

The day before he was gunned down, he broadcast a sermon in which he called on El Salvador's soldiers to disobey "immoral" orders. "Soldier," he

said, "do not obey an order against the law of God . . . I beg you, I command you, in the name of God: stop the repression."

As tributes to the slain Archbishop poured in from people throughout the world, *AI* said in a statement that he had been "martyred" in the cause of human rights and warned that the lives of other human rights activists in El Salvador were at risk.

AI also disclosed that it had sent an urgent communication to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States, calling attention to the danger threatening Archbishop Romero and others who had spoken out in defence of human rights in El Salvador. The communication also documented 32 cases of detentions in rural areas that have not been acknowledged by the authorities and 132 cases of extrajudicial executions of *campesinos* since the beginning of the year.

Guatemala killings

Guatemala's "Secret Anti-Communist Army" (ESA), a "death squad" known to be close to the country's military establishment, published the name of Dr Hugo Rolando MELGAR, chief legal adviser and law professor at the University of San Carlos, on its regularly up-dated "death list". He and a companion were slain on 24 March.

Three days later Dr Julio Alfonso FIGUEROA, Director of the university's Institute of Social and Economic Research, was shot down with his wife, Margarita CARRILLO.

Among 11 student leaders killed in the same month were the Vice-President of the Association of Economics Students and the student representative on the university's governing council.

The death toll rose by a further 38

with the discovery of the decaying remains of bodies in a mass grave 48 kilometres outside Guatemala City on 19 March. Most of the corpses showed signs of torture and had been shot in the head.

Among those identified were student Rodolfo PALENCIA, abducted on 7 March, and trade unionist César Anibal Cano GARCIA, a glass worker abducted on 21 February.

Discovery of the body of Liliana Negreros, last seen alive in police custody, appeared to provide further evidence of police complicity in the wave of political murder that has swept the country.

France

Protesters sentenced

An *AI* observer attended the trial in March of nine anti-nuclear demonstrators accused of fighting police and paratroopers in Brittany. *AI* is concerned about summary trial procedures against demonstrators charged under the special anti-violence law (*loi anti-casseur*). Eight defendants received sentences of 15 days to one month. One was acquitted. All were immediately freed.

Prisoner Releases and Cases

The International Secretariat learned in March of the release of 131 prisoners under adoption or investigation and took up 112 new cases.

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