



SRI LANKA

Call for curb on wide arrest powers

AI has urged President Junius R. Jayewardene of Sri Lanka to prevent extrajudicial killings of civilians by the country's security forces and to restrict the wide powers of arrest under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

The movement has also appealed for a full and impartial investigation into killings reported since July 1983 and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

AI's appeal, made public in a news release on 18 June, coincided with the publication of documents it had compiled containing eye-witness evidence of extrajudicial killings by the security forces last year, reports of further killings in March and April this year and the movement's other human rights concerns in Sri Lanka (see February 1984 and September 1983 Newsletters).

Violence in north

The killings erupted in the wake of violence in the north of Sri Lanka where some members of the Tamil minority have demanded a separate state. Some of the violence was attributed to Tamil extremist groups.

AI has urged President Jayewardene to suspend fully Emergency Regulation 15a which allows for the disposal of bodies without inquest and which it believed facilitated the killings.

It has welcomed in principle a reported statement in early June by National Security Minister Lalith Athulathmudali that henceforth inquests would be held into all deaths at the hands of the security forces under procedures laid down in an amendment to that regulation. However, it has urged that inquests should follow

ordinary procedures laid down in Sri Lanka's criminal code.

There has been a clear failure by the government to investigate security force killings adequately. To AI's knowledge there have been no criminal prosecutions of officials believed responsible for them, and in only one case was an inquest even held.

Furthermore, extrajudicial killings have not been officially condemned. The government has merely stated that it "does not condone" such killings of unarmed civilians or, in other cases, has sought to justify them by stating that civilians were killed during an "exchange of fire" with "terrorists"—without, however, permitting inquest proceedings to be held.

To protect the future safety of political detainees, AI considers that there should be a full and impartial investigation into the killings in July 1983 of 53 political prisoners held under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

It has further urged the government to restrict the wide powers of arrest and incommunicado detention allowed by the act and urged it not to proceed with a proposed amendment which would suspend the right of *habeas corpus* of political detainees.

Minister's assurance

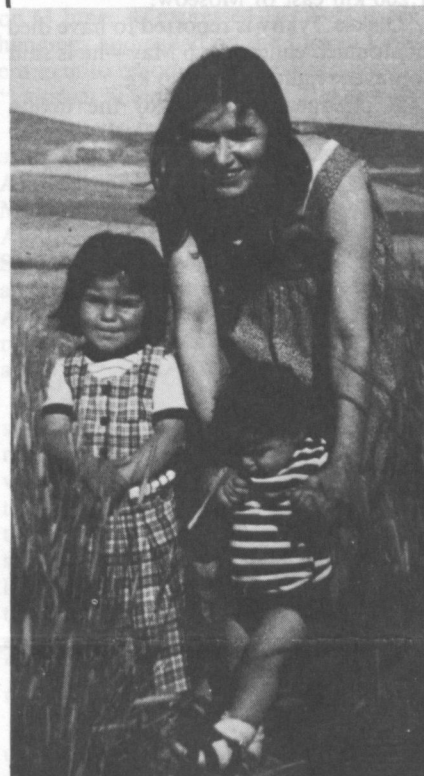
While welcoming National Security Minister Athulathmudali's reported assurance that the security forces had been told to inform detainees' relatives of their arrest within 48 hours, it has pointed out that people detained under the act can still be held incommunicado and denied access to relatives and lawyers.

AI acknowledges that the government has faced serious problems and that members of the security forces have been killed by extremist groups. It condemns the killing or torture of individuals detained by anyone, and emphasizes the government's responsibility to bring to justice the perpetrators of such acts.

Violations of human rights by the security forces, and of the right to life in particular, however, can never be justified. The Sri Lankan Government itself

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Mother freed in Turkey



Sevgi Kilic (above, with her two children) is one of a group of eight teachers acquitted in Turkey in March after a military court reportedly ruled that the only evidence against them were statements they had made under torture. All the defendants had retracted the statements when they appeared before Military Court No. 2 in Ankara.

They had been accused of, among other things, organizing and participating in demonstrations and belonging to banned organizations.

The teachers were arrested towards the end of January this year and held incommunicado in Ankara's Police Headquarters.

In a letter to her husband who lives in exile abroad, Sevgi Kilic later wrote that she and her co-defendants were tortured there over a period of 15 days.

She said she was kept blindfolded, beaten, kicked, given electric shocks and subjected to *falaka* (sustained beating of the soles of the feet)—"I wanted to die," she said.

The prisoners were eventually moved to Mamak Military Prison.

Confirmation of Sevgi Kilic's

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Soviet Union Ukrainian 'monitor' dies in Perm labour colony

A 57-year-old Ukrainian Helsinki monitor has died while serving his seventh year in the Soviet Union's harshest category of corrective labour colony—special regime institution VS 389/36-1 near Perm, some 1,200 km east of Moscow.

Oleksa Tykhy is reported to have died of stomach cancer on 6 May—he is said to have weighed about 40 kg.

A prisoner's account of the taxing conditions of compulsory work, chronic hunger and medical neglect in VS 389/36-1 was featured in the February 1984 *Newsletter*.

Throughout Oleksa Tykhy's imprisonment *AI* had received reports of his ill health, and in 1982 it had appealed for



Oleksa Tykhy: He was arrested in February 1977 on a charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" and was given the maximum sentence of 10 years' imprisonment plus five years' internal exile. This was his second term of political imprisonment. In 1957 he was sentenced to seven years for "counter-revolutionary activity", apparently for expressing Ukrainian nationalist sentiments.

medical professionals all over the world to intercede on his behalf. He was reported to be in constant pain from a stomach ulcer which caused daily vomiting; he suffered also from stenocardia, arteriosclerosis, anaemia, back pains and symptoms of vitamin deficiency.

In 1979 doctors operated on him for a perforated stomach ulcer and for peritonitis. Unusually, they recommended his release from further imprisonment on grounds of ill health. The authorities rejected the recommendation, although release on such grounds is provided for by

Article 100 of the Russian Corrective Labour code.

Oleksa Tykhy was one of the founders of the unofficial Ukrainian Helsinki monitoring group in November 1976. Like its counterparts in Moscow and in the Lithuanian, Georgian and Armenian republics, the group's stated aim was to monitor the Soviet Government's compliance with the human rights provisions of the 1975 Helsinki Accords. Thirty-three Helsinki monitors are currently imprisoned, in internal exile, or confined to psychiatric hospitals as punishment for this activity. All have been adopted by *AI* as prisoners of conscience.

Aleksei Nikitin

• It has also been reported that Aleksei Nikitin, aged 47, died of stomach cancer in early 1984, one month after his release from three years' psychiatric confinement as a prisoner of conscience.

A former mining engineer from the Ukraine, he was arrested in December 1980 after meeting two foreign journalists, allegedly to discuss working conditions in the Donbass mines and his attitude to events in Poland. Ruled unaccountable for his actions, he was ordered to be compulsorily confined for an indefinite period in a special psychiatric hospital—the most severe category of Soviet psychiatric institution.

AI adopted him as a prisoner of conscience, since the evidence showed clearly that he was confined not for medical reasons, but for the peaceful exercise of his rights to freedom of expression and association.

Shortly before his arrest he voluntarily underwent examination by Dr Anatoly Koryagin, a Soviet psychiatrist associated with a Moscow-based unofficial working commission to investigate psychiatric abuse.

Dr Koryagin concluded that Aleksei Nikitin was not, and never had been, in need of compulsory confinement.

After he had publicized his conclusions at a press conference of foreign journalists, Dr Koryagin himself was tried and sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment and internal exile for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda".

Aleksei Nikitin was confined to special psychiatric hospitals in Dnepropetrovsk and Alm-Ata, where in 1982 it was reported that his eyesight was seriously impaired as a result of forcible drug treatment.

In May 1983 he is reported to have undergone surgery for cancer of the stomach. In September 1983 he was transferred to an ordinary psychiatric hospital (No. 2) in his home town of Donetsk □

Tunisia Death sentences: Four hanged, commutation for eight others

Four people were executed in Tunisia in March and May—they were among 15 people reported to have been sentenced to death in the country so far this year.

Abdullah Ben Ahmed Ben Belgacem Midani and **M'hamed Ben Ali Ben Amor Romdhane** were executed on 13 March 1984, after being convicted of treason by the military court of Tunis on 14 January 1984.

On 28 May **Al Mouldi Ben Othman Ben Mu'ammam Beshu'** and **Al Sebti Shahar Al Hedi Ben Ahmed Al 'Awadi** were executed as a result of their conviction by a criminal court on charges of murder and attempted murder during a theft.

AI expressed its concern to the Tunisian authorities on both occasions but received no reply.

Ten of the others sentenced to death, on 26 May, were youths convicted of killing two motorists during Tunisia's "bread riots" in January 1984.

On 14 June the Tunis Supreme Court of Appeal confirmed the sentences on eight of them but ordered a retrial of the remaining two.

On 19 June President Bourguiba commuted the confirmed death sentences on the eight to life imprisonment. (*AI* had appealed to him to commute all 10 death sentences.)

The 15th person sentenced to death—by a criminal court on 30 April—was **Ali Ben Mohamed Ben Bilqassim Al 'Arfawi**, convicted of murdering his wife. He had previously been sentenced to death for the same offence but the Court of Appeal had ordered a retrial. (*AI* had appealed to President Bourguiba to commute the original death sentence.) □

STOP PRESS: *AI* has received further reports of the physical liquidation of "enemies of the people" in Libya, since its telex message to Colonel Gadaffi on 13 June (see page 7). On 10 June Tripoli radio announced that the "basic people's congress" of Zawarah held an extraordinary session to carry out the death sentence against Farahat Ammar Hlab, accused of being a "conspiring agent of the Muslim Brotherhood". On 13 June it was reported that a Libyan-born Greek shopkeeper, Manolis Hilidakis, was shot and wounded in Athens by another Libyan. Manolis Hilidakis, who left Libya in 1970, had recently been distributing copies of an anti-Gadaffi magazine.

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.

Ali Ben Younes NOUIR, Tunisia
A former secondary school teacher aged 35, he is serving a 10-year prison sentence imposed in October 1981. He is reported to be in very poor health.

Ali Ben Younes Nour is one of about 90 people who were arrested in Tunisia in July 1981. Most of them were members of the *Mouvement de la Tendence Islamique*, an organization which is prohibited in Tunisia—it is on record as rejecting violence as a means of political change.

Ali Ben Younes Nour and others were charged with defaming the head of state, participating in a proscribed organization and disseminating false information (under Articles 48 and 49 of the Press Code, and Article 30 of Law 154 of 7 November 1959). None of the charges referred to the use or advocacy of violence.

The defendants were tried by the *tribunal correctionnel* (a lower court) in Tunis. Defence lawyers were given the case dossier only three days before the trial opened on 27 August 1981—the papers reportedly ran to some 3,000 pages. The trial was then postponed to 31 August to give the lawyers more time to study the dossier.

During the subsequent course of the trial the court noted allegations that several defendants had been tortured while in the custody of the security police, the *Direction de la Sûreté de l'Etat*.

The case for the defence began on 2 September and ran for more than 27 hours without a recess, despite numerous protests by defence lawyers.

Ali Ben Younes Nour was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment, reduced on appeal to 10 years.

He is being held in Bourj Er-Roumi prison near Bizerte and is reported to be suffering from digestive ailments, aortic stenosis, angina and skin problems. He was reportedly kept in hospital for five days in April this year.

AI believes he has been imprisoned in an attempt to prevent him exercising his rights to freedom of expression.

Please send courteous letters, in French if possible, appealing for his immediate release to: Son Excellence Habib Bourguiba/Président de la République/Résidence Présidentielle/Tunis-Carthage/Tunisia.

Orton and Vera CHIRWA, Malawi

He is a former senior Cabinet Minister and she a university law lecturer. Both were sentenced to death for "treason" in May 1983.

Orton Chirwa was Minister of Justice and Attorney General when Malawi became independent in 1964. Later that year, however, he left the country after a cabinet dispute and subsequently founded the Malawi Freedom Movement in opposition to the Malawi Government—it did not use or espouse violence.

The Chirwas were detained by Malawi security forces on 24 December 1981—they say they were forcibly abducted from Zambian territory but the Malawi authorities allege they were arrested after entering Malawi clandestinely. Their son, **Fumbani Chirwa**, was detained at the same time but was released uncharged in February 1984 after more than two years in custody.

Orton and Vera Chirwa were charged with treason in June 1982 and tried by the Southern Region Traditional Court. They were convicted and sentenced to death in May 1983 after a trial which did not satisfy internationally accepted standards.

Late last year the National Traditional Court of Appeal upheld their conviction; it confirmed their death sentences in February 1984. They then petitioned Life-President Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda for clemency.

AI considers the couple have been imprisoned and sentenced to death because of their political beliefs. It considers also that they did not receive a fair trial. They were not permitted legal representation at their trial or appeal hearings and Orton Chirwa was not allowed to call witnesses from abroad or arrange for their evidence to be taken on commission. The prosecution's evidence appears to have been insubstantial and the Traditional Court which tried them, by government decision, cannot be considered independent: its judges are chiefs lacking formal legal training and having no security of tenure.

Stop Press: On 28 June the Malawi authorities informed foreign missions that the death sentences on Orton and Vera Chirwa had been commuted to life imprisonment. No official announcement was made.

Please send courteous letters welcoming the commutation of the death sentences and urging that Orton and Vera Chirwa be released from prison without delay to: His Excellency Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda / Life-President of the Republic of Malawi / Office of the President and Cabinet/Lilongwe/Malawi.

Tiao Souk BOUAVONGS, Laos
A former member of parliament aged about 80, he has been detained without charge or trial for nearly nine years and is reported to be physically infirm.

Tiao (Prince) Souk Bouavongs is reported to have been arrested in Vientiane on 15 October 1975, when his house was searched and various papers and other objects seized—including a toy pistol.

Four days previously his house is reported to have been surrounded by local militia and the electricity cut off. At the time he was so ill with rheumatism that he could move only with assistance. He still suffers severely from rheumatism and is dependent on medication.

After his arrest he was accused of involvement in an alleged attempt to overthrow the government—but no charges followed and he is still held without charge or trial.

He was a member of parliament from 1955 until its dissolution in June 1975, when the Pathet Lao took control of Laos. He served as Minister of Public Works and Director of Posts and Telegraphs in the 1950s and is a former Vice-President of the National Assembly.

Unlike many other officials and civil servants of the previous government, who were sent to re-education camps after the Pathet Lao came to power, Tiao Souk Bouavongs was at first detained in Samkhe prison, near Vientiane. In March 1983 he was reported to be in Pha Deng prison in Viengsay, in northeastern Laos.

The allegations made at the time of his arrest have never been substantiated, and AI believes he has been detained because of his political activities and functions under the previous government.

Please send courteous letters, preferably in French, appealing for his release to: Son Excellence Kaysone Phomvihane /Premier Ministre/Vientiane/République démocratique populaire du Laos.

Independence and impartiality are fundamental principles in the work of Amnesty International (AI). They affect all the movement's worldwide activities from painstaking research into individual cases through to mass publicity campaigns. These principles can be tested by looking at AI's policies, its information and its working methods.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL: Independence and Impartiality

IS AI POLITICAL?

AI works solely for the protection of certain fundamental human rights. It does not support or oppose any government or political system. Its activities focus strictly on prisoners:

- It seeks the **release of prisoners of conscience**. These are people detained anywhere for their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religion, who have not used or advocated violence.
- It works for **fair and prompt trials** for all **political prisoners** and on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial.
- It opposes the **death penalty** and **torture** or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of **all prisoners** without reservation.

In carrying out this mandate, AI does not support or oppose the views of the prisoners whose rights it seeks to defend. It addresses the human rights involved in each case, regardless of the ideology of the government or the beliefs of the victims.

IS AI LINKED TO ANY PARTY OR GOVERNMENT?

AI is independent. It began in 1961 with a newspaper appeal calling on people to press for the respect of human rights in all countries, regardless of ideology.

Today the movement has more than 500,000 members, subscribers and supporters in over 150 countries and territories; it is open to anyone who supports its goals.

It is independent of all governments. It is not part of any political grouping nor does it undertake joint sponsorship of activities with other groups.

HOW IS AI FUNDED?

AI relies on donations from its members and supporters. This financial independence is vital. Rules about accepting contributions are strict to ensure that no funds received affect its integrity, make it dependent on any donor or limit its freedom of activity. No government money can be sought or received for AI's own



budget; such contributions can be accepted only for humanitarian relief to prisoners and then only if administered by AI.

HOW DOES AI COLLECT INFORMATION?

When AI hears of political arrests or

people facing torture or execution, it concentrates first on getting the facts. At the International Secretariat, the Research Department collects and analyses information from a wide range of sources, including governments, local organizations, official and unofficial news media and independent observers.

AI also sends fact-finding missions to countries to observe trials and interview government officials. No source of information is ruled out on political grounds alone: the aim is to build up a picture of the human rights situation that is as thoroughly corroborated and complete as possible.

HOW DOES AI ENSURE ACCURACY?

AI makes a clear distinction between facts and allegations. The credibility of all sources of information is carefully assessed. To protect the impartiality of the research, staff do not have responsibility for decisions concerning their own country. Furthermore, to ensure the quality of its information, all statements issued by AI go through a series of vetting procedures, including legal scrutiny.

WHAT IS AI'S STAND ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES?

AI works on the basis of a **single, universal standard: the human rights proclaimed by the international community through the United Nations and other bodies.**

Working with the most reliable information available to it, AI seeks effective ways of helping victims wherever it is aware that these rights have been violated. Techniques include long-term adoption of individual cases; publicizing patterns of human rights abuses; missions to talk to government representatives; or in cases where torture or death are feared, a network of volunteers to send urgent tele-

grams signalling international concern.

Each technique (or combination of methods) is used pragmatically to get results in the best interests of the prisoners, and inevitably varies from country to country.

For this reason, the whole range of the movement's work must be taken into account when assessing its overall impartiality. In all cases AI seeks and remains open to dialogue with governments. It does not grade governments according to their human rights records or attempt comparisons between one country and another.

HOW DOES AI CHOOSE ITS CASES?

Each case is decided on its own merits: the International Secretariat takes into account the reliability of available information, whether it falls within AI's mandate and the most effective way of aiding the victims. Several safeguards help to ensure overall impartiality:

- Local AI groups are not allocated cases of prisoners held in their own country, nor do they collect or issue information on their own countries.
- Each group is allocated cases with contrasting geographical and political backgrounds.
- Groups are not asked to work on cases in countries which are in conflict with their own when this could in any way jeopardize the prisoner in question or give the impression that AI is itself politically biased.

HOW DOES AI DEAL WITH OPPOSITION GROUPS AND GOVERNMENTS?

AI, as a matter of principle, condemns the torture and execution of prisoners by anyone, including opposition groups. It holds that responsibility for dealing with such abuses rests with governments, acting in conformity with international standards for the protection of human rights.

In its approaches to governments, AI respects certain standards: it informs the authorities of missions sent to their countries, seeks meetings with their representatives and submits the reports of those missions for comment to the government before publication.

IS AI'S WORK WORLDWIDE?

The problems that AI confronts are to be found in every region and under all political systems—a sobering fact that results in enormous demands being made on the organization's resources for fact-finding and action.

Since it was founded, AI has worked on behalf of more than 25,000 individual prisoners, held at some point in virtually every nation in the world—although the difficulties of collecting accurate information from some countries are formidable. Its annual report regularly includes entries on more than 100 countries.

If you are interested in learning more about AI's work or obtaining a copy of the most recent annual report, you can contact the local section or group in your area, or write to the International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom □

Death Penalty Executions in 39 countries in 1983

At least 1,699 people in 39 countries were executed in 1983 and at least 1,160 were sentenced to death in 63 countries, according to figures compiled by AI.

These figures represent only those cases AI knows about and the true figure may be far higher, because many governments do not publish death sentences and executions.

While AI knows of 399 prisoners executed in Iran in 1983, for example, the figure is certainly higher, since many executions were carried out in secret and never announced publicly.

Similarly, while AI has recorded more than 700 executions in China during the year, the figure is based on media reports from only a few urban centres. The true figure may be in the thousands.

AI made these statistics public in a news release on 26 June in which it called for an end to the death penalty. Among other worrying figures, it said, were the more than 300 executions in Iraq last year and the 1,300 people currently under sentence of death in the USA, where the number of executions had been increasing.

Executions after torture

AI is also concerned about the high incidence of executions of prisoners who have been tortured and denied fair trials.

In 1983 the majority of known executions throughout the world were carried out after procedures that fell short of international norms for a fair trial.

Calling on all countries to outlaw executions for all offences, AI said in its news release that it opposed the death penalty as the ultimate cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and as a violation of the right to life.

"The death penalty is irreversible, capable of being inflicted on the innocent—two Japanese were found innocent during the past year after spending more than 30 years under sentence of death—brutalizing to all involved in the process, and often inflicted disproportionately on certain racial, ethnic, religious, underprivileged and opposition groups," it said.

"It also denies the principle of rehabilitating an offender and has never been shown to deter crime more effectively than more humane punishments."

Abolition trend

On the positive side, there has been a worldwide trend towards conforming to the 1977 United Nations General Assembly call for abolition of the death penalty.

By the end of 1983 the total number of states which had abolished it for all offences rose to 26—and another 18 have now abolished it for all but extraordinary offences, such as wartime crimes.

So far 14 countries have signed the

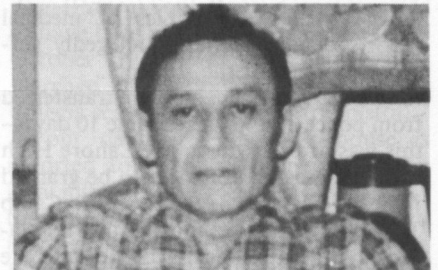
1983 protocol to the European Convention on Human Rights abolishing the death penalty for peacetime offences and three have ratified it. Only two more ratifications are needed from member states of the 21-nation Council of Europe for the protocol to come into force □

Paraguay Ovando released after 21 years

One of Paraguay's longest-serving political prisoners, **Guillermo Escolástico Ovando**, was released on 21 May after being held for more than 21 years.

The case of the 57-year-old former cavalry sergeant featured in AI's *Briefing on Paraguay*, which was published in February this year (see *March Newsletter*).

Guillermo Ovando acted as driver for an army captain alleged to have been a political rival of the President, General Alfredo Stroessner. The pair were arrested in December 1962 and were among a group accused of responsibility for the



Guillermo Escolástico Ovando

death of a military cadet and of involvement in a conspiracy against President Stroessner.

The two men were convicted by a military court of murder and sentenced to death—later commuted to 15 years' imprisonment for Sergeant Ovando and 25 years' for Captain Modesto Ortigoza.

Guillermo Ovando's sentence expired in December 1977 but he remained in prison under Paraguay's state of siege provisions.

AI groups began to investigate the cases of the two men in 1980 because the organization believed that neither had received a fair trial and that they had been convicted on the basis of evidence extracted under torture.

Guillermo Ovando's release is presumed to have been authorized by President Stroessner himself. Reports in the Brazilian press say the former sergeant looked frail and walked with difficulty after his release—after December 1977 he staged many hunger-strikes protesting against his continued detention, most recently in early May this year.

Captain Ortigoza is still in prison, in the high security *Guardia de Seguridad* in Asunción □

Pakistan Students allege torture in police custody

Twenty-seven students have filed complaints in the Lahore High Court alleging that they were tortured while in police custody earlier this year.

They are said to be members of *Islami Jamiat-i-Talaba*, the student organization of the political party *Jamaat-i-Islami*.

Most of the 27 students were arrested in a Lahore mosque in March. All were held incommunicado for between one and five days in various police stations in the city, most of them in the Wahdat Colony and Ravi Road stations.

Twenty-one of the students alleged that they had been beaten with batons by the police and that several had been seriously injured. They said some students were punched, and beaten with the soles of leather shoes.

Three students at Ravi Road Police Station are reported to have had their eyebrows and pubic hair burned and to have had smoke from cigarettes and candles forced into their eyes and nose. Hair was also said to have been plucked out with tweezers.

AI has received copies of medical reports detailing injuries allegedly suffered by some of the students.

The detained students were transferred from police custody after some 10 days—this was after a writ to the Lahore High Court had asked for them to be granted judicial remand. They were sent to Camp Jail, Lahore, under martial law regulations banning political activities and the incitement of hatred towards the armed forces.

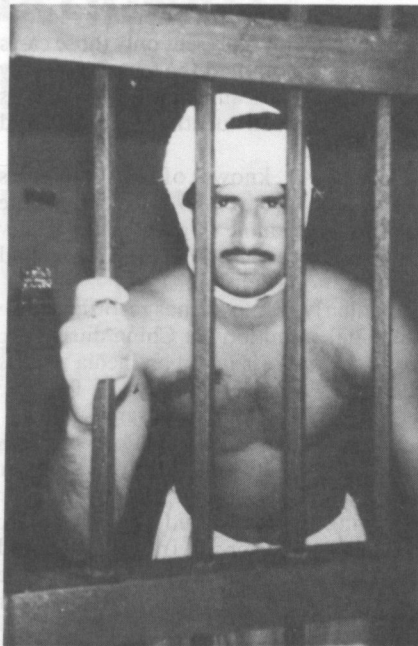
Student unions have been banned throughout Pakistan since early 1984, and students have protested against this in demonstrations and other public activities. On 4 June it was announced that all students who had been arrested during protests after the ban on student unions were to be freed. AI is seeking confirmation of this.

The Lahore High Court heard the 27 students' complaints and called for a report from the Advocate-General of Punjab province. On 15 May the court disposed of the students' petitions, observing that the Acting Advocate-General had stated that Punjab's Inspector General of Police would, according to Police Rules, register a case if the allegations constituted a "cognizable case".

Since the promulgation of the Provisional Constitution Order 1981, the High Courts are no longer empowered to scrutinize the actions of the martial law administration.

AI recommendation

AI has urged the provincial authorities to institute an impartial and independent commission of inquiry into the students'



Hafiz Saeed Zafar, one of the students alleging torture by the police. He claims that he received head injuries and cuts on the body.

complaints and to publish the findings in full. It further recommended that those found responsible should be brought to justice.

• AI has also continued to receive allegations of political prisoners being tortured by members of the armed forces. Such torture is reported to have occurred particularly when prisoners were held incommunicado in special interrogation centres run by the armed forces.

Five prisoners of conscience freed

Five of the group of six prisoners in Pakistan who were prisoners of the month in January 1984 were released in mid-May. **Sheikh Sohail Ahmed, Shahnawaz Bhatti, Majeed Malik, Nawaz Rabbani** and **Riaz Raja** had all been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment for possession of material allegedly prejudicial to the martial law government. The sixth prisoner, **Shoab Mir**, who was convicted in the same case, is still in prison; he is a former international cricket umpire □

Prisoner releases and cases

AI learned in May 1984 of the release of 88 prisoners under adoption or investigation; it took up 153 cases.

Malawi Students freed after 15 months —no charges

Four university students who had been adopted by AI as prisoners of conscience were released from detention on 14 May after being held without charge or trial for over 15 months. They were among an unknown number of prisoners who were freed to mark Kamuzu Day, the official birthday of Life-President Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda.

The four students—**Zangaphe Chizeze, Edge Kanyongolo, Tubby Chibwana** and **Mack Willie Killion**—had been arrested in February 1983 apparently on suspicion of forming a new political group in opposition to the Malawi Congress Party, the only political party permitted under the Constitution—but they were not charged.

They were reportedly held for several months at Mikuyu Detention Centre, northeast of Zomba, where several hundred uncharged political detainees were imprisoned in the mid-1970s □

Liberia Seventeen get death sentences—then 10 are freed next day

A total of 17 people were sentenced to death in Liberia on 5 April—10 of them were reportedly pardoned and released the next day.

Thirteen of those sentenced to death had been on trial since late December 1983 on charges of plotting to overthrow the government. (Six others in this trial were acquitted.)

The remaining four death sentences were handed down for armed robbery.

On 5 and 6 April AI sent appeals to the Liberian authorities to commute all the death sentences.

Late on 6 April the authorities announced the pardon and release of 10 of the group of 13 prisoners sentenced to death for plotting against the government. There were reportedly large demonstrations in the capital, Monrovia, the next day to celebrate the releases.

However, the remaining seven prisoners are reported to be still under sentence of death and AI has initiated appeals for commutation of their sentences □

DEATH PENALTY

AI has learned of 176 people being sentenced to death in 18 countries and of 122 executions in eight countries during May 1984.

Uruguay Doctor dies under torture

A 42-year-old Uruguayan doctor is reported to have died under torture in a military barracks in mid-April—only hours after his wife had seen him being hooded and forced screaming into a military transport.

Dr **Vladimir Andrés Roslik Bichkov** was one of seven people arrested at about 4 a.m. during a raid on a Rio Negro cooperative on 15 April.

The raid was said to be part of military "anti-subversive activities" in the cooperative of San Javier, a long-established colony of Russian immigrants in the department of Rio Negro.

The detainees—one aged 72—were hooded and driven to the military barracks in the department's capital, Fray Bentos.

Dr Roslik had previously been arrested in 1980 and imprisoned for 15 months in



Dr Vladimir Andrés Roslik Bichkov with his four-month-old son, Valery Andrés.

connection with his alleged links with the banned Communist Party of Uruguay.

He is reported to have been tortured there while in detention.

His wife said that as he was being hooded during the 15 April raid he shouted: "No, not again . . . I don't want that to happen again . . .".

Later that morning Dr Roslik's family was told to collect his body from the Fray Bentos hospital. He had been dead on arrival. An official autopsy gave the cause of death as "cardiac arrest".

A second autopsy was performed but the results were not made public until the middle of May, after the case had been widely publicized by the opposition press in Uruguay.

On 18 May the Montevideo newspaper *Jaque* reported in detail on the findings of the second autopsy, which had concluded that the cause of death was acute anaemia, resulting from massive internal bleeding, with signs of asphyxiation.

There were said to be large bruises on the body.

At the end of May, an army colonel and a major were reported to have been tried in connection with the death. No details are available.

At the time of going to press, three of the others arrested with Dr Roslik on 15 April were reported to be still held incommunicado in a military barracks in Montevideo. *AI* has issued urgent appeals on their behalf.

• On 2 May *AI* wrote a message to the President of Uruguay welcoming the return of nine prisoners to the main prison for male political prisoners, the *Penal de Libertad*. They had been held for the previous 10 years in various military barracks throughout the country (see September 1983 *Newsletter*).

AI said it hoped that their return would mean an end to the solitary confinement they had suffered for a decade. Although they are now allowed regular visits and periods of recreation, they are reportedly still in solitary confinement. There is serious concern for their health □

WILSON FERREIRA AND SON ARRESTED

AI adopted the Uruguayan opposition leaders Wilson Ferreira Aldunate and his son Juan Raúl Ferreira as prisoners of conscience and called for their immediate release after they had been arrested on 16 June.

They were detained on their return to Uruguay after 11 years in exile. *AI* adopted them because they were being detained solely for the expression of their conscientiously-held, non-violent beliefs.

Wilson Ferreira, 65, leader of the *Blanco* (or National) party who was a close runner-up in the 1971 presidential election, and his son, 31, have been outspoken critics of the Uruguayan military government's human rights record.

In a news release of 19 June, *AI* expressed concern that they had been brought before a military judge the day before and charged with offences which appeared strictly political and non-violent.

Wilson Ferreira was committed to trial on charges carrying penalties of up to 30 years' imprisonment. These included assisting a "subversive association", attacking the morale of the armed forces, exposing the nation to risk of retaliation, and plotting against the constitution.

Juan Raúl Ferreira, the *Blanco* party's foreign affairs spokesperson, was charged with attacking the morale of the armed forces.

AI telexed its concern about the arrests to Uruguayan President Gregorio C. Alvarez and called on him to free the two men immediately □

Libya Seven hanged in public

Seven people were hanged in public in Libya in June after summary hearings by local "people's" bodies backing Libyan leader Mu'ammarr Gaddafi's declared aim of ridding the country of "stray dogs and traitors".

In a telex message to Colonel Gaddafi on 13 June, *AI* expressed alarm about the hangings and called on the Libyan Government to renounce its official policy of "physical liquidation" of its "enemies".

The seven people hanged between 3 and 7 June were Sassi Ali Sassi Zikri, Ahmad Ali Ahmad Sulayman, Mohammad Said Al Shaybani, Othman Ali Al Zarti, Assadeq Hamed Al Shuweihdi, Al Mehdi Rajab Abdul Salam and Abdel Bari Omar Mansour Fannoush Al Mijbiri. Two of the victims were reportedly hanged within an hour of their arrest.

AI is deeply concerned because the seven victims seem to have been arbitrarily arrested and summarily executed without trial on suspicion of opposition to the government. Such summary executions are prohibited under all major legal systems as well as under international law. *AI* fears that the executions appear to have been in implementation of government policy to "liquidate" its "enemies". The organization has received reports of further scheduled executions.

AI, which opposes the death penalty unconditionally, urged that all people who were arrested be guaranteed legal and medical safeguards, including access to relatives, a lawyer and a doctor.

The hangings took place after hundreds of people had been arrested in a fresh clampdown on real or alleged government opponents following the 8 May abortive attack on Colonel Gaddafi's headquarters at Bab Al Aziziya Barracks in Tripoli.

The opposition National Front for the Salvation of Libya said it had carried out the attack. Afterwards, people's committees and "basic people's congresses" all over the country reportedly renewed their pledges of support for Colonel Gaddafi.

They also reportedly renewed their calls for the liquidation of "stray dogs and traitors" and warned that "the hand of the revolution would reach them wherever they are to fulfil the sentence of the people on them".

AI has received the names of 84 of the people arrested after the Bab Al Aziziya attack. Several were reportedly shown on Libyan television making confessions, their faces and hands bearing what appeared to marks of torture.

The organization believes that political detainees in Libya risk being tortured during interrogation and is concerned that many of the people arrested recently may have been tortured □

Peruvian peasant leaders say they are caught 'between two fires'

Another leader of a peasant organization has been detained and has alleged that he was tortured by the country's Civil Guard.

The Press Secretary of Peru's Confederation of Peasants is reported to have been tortured and ill-treated while being held by the country's Civil Guard in March.

Carlos Taype, of the *Confederación Campesina del Perú* (CCP) was arrested on 17 March while representing his organization at an affiliate's congress in the town of Satipo, in Junín province.

He is reported to have been taken to the Civil Guard's Seventh Command in the provincial capital, Huancayo.

Detailed reports

AI has received detailed reports that he was tortured and ill-treated there.

From 17 to 19 March he is said to have been systematically beaten and forced to stand for long periods, spending one whole night handcuffed to a concrete pillar.

He is said to have been kept blindfold continuously until the afternoon of 19 March, when he was ordered to sign a statement declaring that he had not been ill-treated.

Sri Lanka

Continued from page 1

told the United Nations Human Rights Committee last November that: "It has been and still is the government's duty to protect the right to life and other fundamental rights of all people in Sri Lanka." □

Release in Turkey

Continued from page 1

acquittal and release has come from the Turkish Embassy in Austria, which wrote the following to *AI*'s Austrian section:

"Following a campaign initiated by Amnesty International, we have received letters stating that Sevgi Kilic has been arrested and ill-treated and that there is concern about her whereabouts.

"Sevgi Kilic was placed in pre-trial detention on 24 January 1984 because of her membership of an illegal underground organization. According to a decision of Military Court II in Ankara to continue trial proceedings against her while she was at liberty, she was released on 13 February 1984 and was acquitted on 16 March 1984." □



Carlos Taype

It is also alleged that he was given no food or water or protection from the cold—Huancayo is a cold, high-altitude city—until his transfer from the Civil Guard barracks to Huancayo prison.

There he was charged with "terrorism", under a March 1981 decree law, and other offences related to his leadership of the CCP and to his non-violent activities in his home *comunidad campesina* (peasant community) of Colcabamba.

AI has adopted him as a prisoner of conscience. He is one of many Peruvians detained on charges of "terrorism" whom *AI* understands to have been detained solely for leadership of peasant communities and organizations.

Land disputes

Carlos Taype's arrest is believed to have been related directly to his work at a national level with the CCP, and to conflicts over land rights between the Colcabamba community, which holds land in common, and private estate owners.

The multiple charges against him and other members and former members of Colcabamba's community government were, to *AI*'s knowledge, filed by the same small group of private individuals with grievances against the community.

Colcabamba's former President, **Clemente Quispe**, is also in detention. He was arrested on 18 February 1983, and has been adopted by *AI* as a prisoner of conscience.

Carlos Taype's brothers **Godofredo** and **Milton**, and Colcabamba's then-President, **Juan Alonso Trunqui**, were detained for most of 1983 on charges of "terrorism", before being acquitted.

Although higher courts have repeatedly ruled that charges filed by local estate owners against Colcabamba's leaders were without basis, detentions continue regularly, based on what *AI* believes to be a series of false and malicious prosecutions. Such prosecutions may result in

prisoners of conscience being detained for years before their trials end and they are acquitted.

The arrests of peasant leaders have been carried out in the context of police actions against the *Sendero Luminoso*, Shining Path, guerrilla group. However, this group has attacked not only government personnel and installations, but also leaders of peasant communities, cooperatives, and labour organizations which do not support the guerrillas.

Death threats

It has carried out scores of public, execution-style killings of peasant community leaders and issued death threats against representatives of national, left-wing peasant organizations.

Peasant leaders have described their situation as being "between two fires", as they face detention, torture and, in some areas, extrajudicial execution by the Civil Guard, while also being under threat of death from *Sendero Luminoso*.

On 13 February 1983 Colcabamba community members voted both to protest against arbitrary arrest and harrassment by the Civil Guard—and to reject *Sendero Luminoso* demands that they collaborate in its activities.

The next day seven dead dogs were hung from the bandstand in Colcabamba's central plaza with a message from *Sendero Luminoso* declaring that the community's elected leaders had been sentenced to death—seven names, including those of Carlos Taype and Clemente Quispe, were daubed on the wall in blood. Two of those threatened, Milton Taype and Joel Palomino, were detained the next day by the Civil Guard, on a charge of "terrorism" (both have since been freed).

APPEAL

• *Please write courteous letters requesting the immediate release of Carlos Taype and Clemente Quispe, as prisoners of conscience, to: Presidente Fernando Beláunde Terry/Palacio Nacional/Lima/Perú; send copies of your letters to: Confederación Campesina del Perú/Casilla Postal 5110/Lima/Perú □*

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FILE ON TORTURE

No. 2 July 1984

amnesty international

Syria

The infliction of torture and ill-treatment of political suspects by the security forces in Syria appears to be routine. Information received over the years by Amnesty International indicates that these forces have perpetrated such violations with impunity, making use of the extensive powers of arbitrary arrest and detention provided for by the state of emergency which has been in force for more than 21 years.

Members of the security forces have seized and arrested political suspects at will without immediate reference to any central authority and held them incommunicado for as long as they pleased—in some cases for years. It is during these periods of incommunicado detention that most of the torture reported to Amnesty International is said to have been inflicted.

Most detained security suspects in Syria are not brought to court, and there appears to be no established procedure whereby a detainee can appeal to an outside authority against ill-treatment during detention.

Allegations of torture and ill-treatment are, therefore, made only after the detainee has been released, which may often be months or even several years after the event.

During the 1980s Amnesty International has received reports of 23 different kinds of torture having been inflicted on prisoners in 15 different detention centres or civil or military prisons in various parts of Syria. Seven of the country's eight major security networks have been cited in these reports.

The methods of torture reported have included electric shocks, burnings, whippings with braided steel cables, sexual violations and the forcing of detainees to watch relatives being tortured or sexually assaulted.

Among testimonies received by Amnesty International is that of a 15-year-old schoolboy who said he had been whipped and that his interrogator had threatened to gouge out his eyes if he did not reveal his father's whereabouts.

Another former detainee described a sound-proofed torture chamber in Aleppo equipped with "torture tools", including electrical apparatus, pincers, scissors, a machine used for sexual violation and an implement for "ripping out fingernails".

The extent, consistency and detail of these persistent allega-



Riad al-Turk, 56, a lawyer who has been held incommunicado without charge or trial since October 1980 and is reported to have been tortured recently—earlier this year he was said to be critically ill. See page 3.

tions, some of them supported by medical evidence, has forced Amnesty International to conclude that torture is used systematically during interrogation, both in order to extract information and as punishment.

After a mission to Syria in 1978 Amnesty International expressed concern in detail to the author-

ities there about the allegations it had received and urged them to bring an immediate halt to torture by their security forces. No response to this appeal was received.

In April last year the organization submitted a memorandum to the Syrian Government once more detailing its concerns and including case histories of people who said they had been tortured. There was no government response to this memorandum.

In November 1983 a 65-page report based on the memorandum was published and sent to the government, again without response.

In March 1978 President Hafez al-Assad had acknowledged to Syria's People's Assembly that

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arrest and detention powers provided for by the state of emergency had been abused.

As far as Amnesty International is aware, however, no mention was made of the stream of torture allegations which had been issuing from ex-detainees and the families of those still in detention.

Nor has there been any official acknowledgement of these allegations since then—in spite of the fact that torture is illegal under both domestic Syrian and international law.

Furthermore, Amnesty International knows of no official investigation by the Syrian authorities into allegations of torture by their security forces. It knows of no official having been prosecuted for torturing detainees. It knows of no victim ever having been granted redress for the gross abuses of human rights suffered while in custody.

All three of the above omissions are in breach of the internationally-binding United Nations Declaration on the Protection of All Persons from Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (known as "The Declaration against Torture").

The authorities' toleration of torture and ill-treatment of detainees flouts the UN Declaration on Human Rights and violates the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Syria

ratified on 21 April 1969.

Reports of violations by Syria's security forces continue unabated. Since Amnesty International's report of November 1983 it has received numerous allegations of torture and ill-treatment—two examples appear on page 3 and are appeal cases.

Damascus doctor's torture testimony

A former Damascus general practitioner has given Amnesty International a detailed account of the torture and ill-treatment he says he suffered as a political suspect during 29 months in the hands of Syrian security and prison authorities up to November 1982.

He is now largely blind in one eye—the result, he says, of blows with an iron bar.

Earlier this year a medical specialist in Europe recorded that the eye injury had "come about after repeated blows to his head and face . . . He will almost certainly suffer perpetual visual damage to the left eye."

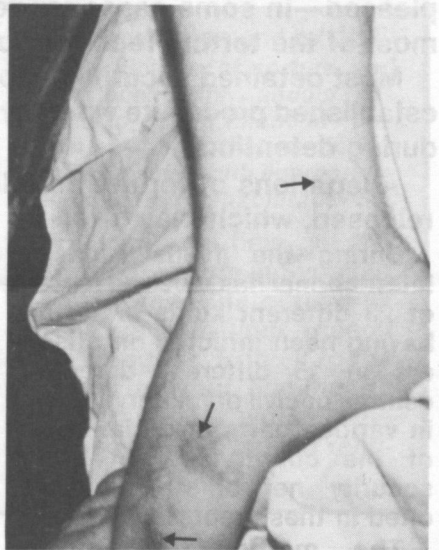
A government inspector who interviewed the injured man in Europe stated in his official report in December 1983: "His feet and back were also burned with a soldering-iron.

His body bears obvious marks of the soldering-iron as well as scars on the soles of his feet resulting from the *falaqa* method"—in this method of torture the soles of the feet are repeatedly beaten with sticks, truncheons or whips.

The doctor says he was arrested because of his association with another political suspect, who, he says, was tortured in custody and then executed.

The doctor himself was apparently tortured during interrogation about his connections with the banned Muslim Brotherhood.

He was later transferred to Tadmur prison, a remote military institution in the desert, where inmates are reported to have been beaten, whipped and otherwise ill-treated daily. A number are said to have died as a result of this treatment or because of the appalling conditions in which they were held.



Marks (arrowed) on the doctor's right foot—he says they are the result of torture.

State of Emergency Law

Thousands of arbitrary arrests and detentions of political suspects in Syria have been carried out under the State of Emergency Law which has been in force since March 1963.

Article 4a of this law relates to:

"The placing of restrictions on freedom of individuals with respect to meetings, residence, travel and passage in specific places or at particular times. Preventive arrest of anyone suspected of endangering public security and order. Authorization to investigate persons and places. Delegation of any person to perform any of these tasks."

Article 4a therefore permits wide powers of arrest and preventive detention to be delegated to members of the security forces

—who carry out most arrests of a political nature in Syria.

There appears to be no limit to how long they may hold suspects incommunicado in preventive detention.

Although the law invests the Martial Law Governor with "all powers of internal and external security", he does not appear to have overall control of security branch activities.

Most reports received by AI suggest that security force commanders answer only to the President, via the Presidential Security Council.

This body is chaired by the President and appears to be the means whereby the heads of the security forces receive their orders.

The prison was infested with flies, lice and rats, the doctor says, and the prisoners' food was often rotten or contaminated by rats. Filth was everywhere—he says the first time he was allowed to wash himself was four months after his arrival at Tadmur.

The prisoners suffered from scabies, chronic diarrhoea and dysentery. Many caught typhoid. Tuberculosis was widespread. The doctor also reports three outbreaks of cholera during his stay—he says he contracted the disease once himself.

Official medical care was virtually non-existent, he says, and it was left to imprisoned doctors to try to cope with sick prisoners.

Among the illnesses they tried to deal with were those resulting from torture—"these were numerous, including wounds on the feet, hands

APPEAL CASES

Riad al-Turk

A 56-year-old lawyer, his life was understood to be in grave danger in January this year after reports had emerged that he had again been tortured by members of the Syrian security forces in Damascus. He has been held in incommunicado detention without charge or trial since his arrest in October 1980.

Riad al-Turk is First Secretary of the Communist Party Political Bureau (CPPB), a prohibited wing of the Communist Party in Syria—the other wing, Soviet-oriented, is represented in the ruling National Progressive Front.

Leading CPPB party members were arrested in October 1980 after attempts had been made to form an internal opposition coalition in Syria.

Among those arrested was Riad al-Turk's wife, Asmah al-Feisal, who was held hostage while the authorities searched for him.

He was eventually arrested in Damascus on 28 October 1980 by agents of *al-Amn al-Siyassi* (Political Security). He is reported to have been severely tortured after arrest.

In February 1981 he was admitted to the intensive care unit at al-

Muwassa'a Hospital in Damascus for urgent treatment.

In January 1982 he was admitted for intensive care to al-Mezze military prison hospital in Damascus, reportedly suffering from inflammation of the kidneys and renal failure.

In January this year Amnesty International received reports that he had been taken from al-Mezze Prison to military intelligence headquarters and tortured in mid-December 1983. His health was reported to have deteriorated seriously and there were grave fears for his life. No further reports on his condition had been received at the time of writing.

Riad al-Turk, who has been adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience, was arrested previously in 1959 and held for two years in al-Mezze Prison. He is reported to have lost his hearing as a result of torture.

Please send courteous letters:

- *appealing to the authorities for the immediate release of Riad al-Turk, as a prisoner of conscience;*
- *urging them to hold an impartial investigation into the allegations that he has been tortured, and to ensure that he gets appropriate medical care.*

Appeals addresses

Send your appeals to: **President Hafez al-Assad / Presidential Palace / Abu-Rumaneh / Al-Rashid Street / Damascus / Syrian Arab Republic;** and to: **Faruq al-Shar' / Minister of Foreign Affairs/Ministry of Foreign Affairs/Al-Rashid Street / Damascus / Syrian Arab Republic.**

The doctor's eventual release after some two years in Tadmur appears to have been on condition that he act as a political informer, a role he says he had no intention of playing.

Soon afterwards he was warned that one of the security services was about to rearrest him for failing to report to them. He fled and is now living in a European country.

Fear of reprisals

For fear of reprisals this doctor wishes not only his name to be kept confidential but even the country in which he has sought refuge.

His fears are not so much for his own safety—although he is as aware as Amnesty International of persistent reports of Syrian security agents being sent to check on, harass, physically assault and even on occasion to kill political suspects abroad—rather, his anxieties are for his relatives back in Syria.

In his testimony he mentions fellow prisoners at Tadmur whom the

**'Abd al-Karim 'Aslan
A 37-year-old teacher in the town of Hama, he has been held in incommunicado detention since 13 March 1984 and is reported to be seriously ill as a result of torture.**

'Abd al-Karim 'Aslan was detained at al-Mezze district of Damascus by *al-Amn al-Dakhili* (Internal Branch) of the security services.

A week later he was transferred to al-Mezze military hospital intensive care unit. Since his arrest he has been denied access to relatives or defence counsel.

In the early 1970s he helped set up different branches of the then League for Communist Action. In September 1981 this became the Party for Communist Action (PCA). At the time of his arrest 'Abd al-Karim 'Aslan was a member of its politburo.

The PCA has criticized both the policies of the present Government of Syria and the Muslim Brotherhood's violent opposition campaign. Since its foundation the party has faced periodic suppression and its members have been arrested and, in a number of cases, tortured.

Please send courteous letters:

- *expressing concern at reports that 'Abd al-Karim 'Aslan is being held incommunicado and is seriously ill, allegedly as a result of torture;*
- *urging that he be given all necessary medical treatment;*
- *requesting that he be permitted access to his family and lawyers.*

or back. As a result of neglect, lack of treatment, continual torture and filth, these wounds became inflamed or festered."

Often prisoners were summarily executed, the doctor says. Reports of a number of extrajudicial executions in Tadmur have reached Amnesty International in recent years. In June 1980, for example, hundreds of imprisoned members of the Muslim Brotherhood were said to have been put to death by security force units which included members of the *Saraya al-Difa' 'an al-Thawra* (Brigades for the Defence of the Revolution), which are commanded by President Assad's brother.

The doctor in this case was never formally charged. He describes a "trial" in which the "judge" was a military officer who did not appear to know why the accused had been brought before him—"The only question he asked me was whether I was guilty. I denied any guilt. I was then forced to put my left thumb-print to a document I had never read."

authorities referred to as "hostages"—relatives held in lieu of political suspects the authorities had so far been unable to apprehend.

Amnesty International has received numerous other reports of this practice. The "hostages" are reported to have included young children. Some of the captive relatives are reported to have been tortured. Others have been detained for months, even years—Amnesty International knows of three who were detained in place of a relative for nine years before being released in 1980.

The doctor's testimony is the latest to be received by Amnesty International from ex-detainees in Syria. The organization cannot confirm all the details, but the account is consistent with others it has received, exceptional only in the amount of medical detail it contains.

● The following extracts relate to his interrogation after his arrest in

Continued on page 4

Continued from page 3

mid-1980 by one of the country's security networks—the place, exact date and certain other details are being kept confidential because of his fear of reprisals.

"I was blindfolded and taken to the interrogator's room. . . . (and) asked about my relationship with (X) and his connection with the organization of the Muslim Brotherhood. I denied (any knowledge of) this, whereupon the prison wardens were ordered to take me to the torture chamber and beat me.

"They dragged me along the ground, stripped and handcuffed me and put me in the *dullab* (suspended tyre). Then they beat my feet with electric cables until they became swollen and started bleeding.

"The interrogator then ordered them to bring me back to his room, so they dragged me along the floor and thrust me in front of him. He repeated the same questions and I gave him the same answers.

"I was taken back to the torture chamber and tortured continuously for two hours. The interrogator then ordered that I be taken to the cell, . . ."

Three hours later he was again taken to the "torture chamber". "There, they removed my handcuffs, stripped me and put me in the *dullab*. They placed electric wires on my hands and feet. They started beating me and turned on the electric current; I screamed. The interrogator came into the room. He repeated his questions and asked me to confess or else I would die under torture.

"He continued torturing me for several hours and then summoned the doctor who was present at the branch. The doctor examined me. . . . (and) told the interrogator that my condition had deteriorated and that I would not be able to withstand much more. So the interrogator ordered that I be returned to the cell, . . ."

Next morning the torture continued: "The torturers beat me all over my body, from head to toe. As a result, my head swelled up, I became blind in one eye and my body was covered with wounds. On this occasion they also turned on the electric current and used an electric iron. . . . Evidence of this torture is still apparent on my body. On that day I nearly died, for I had lost consciousness and only came to at al-Mezze military hospital, where I found myself connected to a serum drip."

● Two days later he was taken back to the detention centre and the interrogation resumed. He says that for the next three weeks he was interrogated under torture for two hours every day. Then he and other detainees were taken to Tadmur military prison.

WHAT YOU CAN DO . . .

1. Write the two letters you are asked to send on behalf of the two victims cited in the Appeal Cases in this *File on Torture*. Address your letters as indicated, or send them to the Syrian embassy in your country.

2. Please write a further letter expressing your concern about reports of the widespread torture of political suspects in Syria.

● Point out that the United Nations has banned torture in all cases (in its 1975 Declaration on Torture).

Please include one or more of the following points in your letters:

● Official condemnation of torture—*Urge the government to demonstrate its total opposition to torture and to make clear to all law-enforcement personnel that torture will not be tolerated under any circumstances.*

● Limits on incommunicado detention—*Urge the government to adopt safeguards to ensure that incommunicado detention does not become an opportunity for torture. Urge that all prisoners be brought before a judicial authority promptly after being taken into custody and that relatives, lawyers and doctors have prompt and regular access to them.*

● Safeguards during interrogation and custody—*Urge the government to keep procedures for detention and interrogation under regular review. All prisoners should be promptly told of their rights, including the right to lodge complaints about their treatment. Urge that there should be regular independent visits of inspection to places of detention.*

● Independent investigation of reports of torture—*Urge the government to ensure that all complaints and reports of torture are impartially and effectively investigated.*

● Prosecution of alleged torturers—*Urge that those responsible for torture be brought to justice.*

● Compensation and rehabilitation—*Victims of torture and their dependants should be entitled to obtain financial compensation—urge that such victims be provided with appropriate medical care or rehabilitation.*

3. You can also help get the facts about torture in Syria out into the open. Share this *File on Torture* with your friends and colleagues. Bring it to the attention of your community centre, place of work, trade union, school, college or religious congregation.

Inquiry call over student's death

In July 1983 Amnesty International appealed for a public inquiry into the death in custody of **Amin Nassur**, a third-year engineering student whom it had adopted as a prisoner of conscience.

The organization had been informed that towards the end of April 1983 he had been among 70 detained members of the Party for Communist Action who were taken to the Latakiyyah branches of

al-Mukhabarat al-'Askariyya (Military Intelligence) and *al-Amn al-Siyassi* (Political Security) and tortured.

Amin Nassur was reportedly beaten with canes, burned all over his body with lighted cigarettes and given electric shocks.

He later lapsed into a deep coma and was transferred under heavy guard to a hospital in Latakiyyah—where he is reported to have died the same night.

It is alleged that, in order to make his death appear a suicide, his guards threw his body from a third-floor hospital window.

The coffin containing his body was handed over to his family for burial with strict instructions by the authorities that it should not be opened—however, Amnesty International understands that it was in fact opened and that the body showed signs of torture.

No response to Amnesty International's appeal for an inquiry into the circumstances of the death has been received from the Syrian authorities.

Report on Syria

Copies of two Amnesty International documents on Syria published in 1983 are still available: **Report from Amnesty International to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic** (in English or Arabic) costs £2; **Syria: an Amnesty International briefing** (English only) costs £0.50. Both are obtainable from the International Secretariat direct or through your own section.