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YUGOSLAVIA

Detainees held in "isolation"

Hundreds of ethnic Albanians from Kosovo province have been held incommunicado in administrative detention by the Yugoslav authorities.

The detainees included signatories to a petition protesting against proposed constitutional changes limiting Kosovo's self-rule.

According to the Yugoslav authorities, between March and May 237 people were held in incommunicado detention known as "isolation" without the right to challenge their detention in court. On 10 May AI wrote to the authorities calling for the release of all those detained for non-violent political activity, among them Ibrahim Osmani, former head of the Kosovo Party information service.

AI also urged an end to the practice of "isolation", which it believed was a violation of both Yugoslavia's Constitution — which states that detention may last no longer than three days unless it is ordered by a court of law — and of its international human rights undertakings.

On 30 May the authorities stated that all but 47 of those detained in isolation had been released.

In March 44 people were reportedly arrested on suspicion of having organized earlier peaceful protests. Later in the month there were violent clashes between ethnic Albanian demonstrators and the security forces after constitutional changes were adopted by the Kosovo Assembly. According to the authorities 24 people died; reports in the Yugoslav press suggested that the death toll had been as high as 200.

In April AI urged the Yugoslav authorities to establish an independent commission to investigate all officially acknowledged deaths as well as other incidents which had allegedly resulted in death or injury.

AI also called for the release of all those arrested in the first half of March as a result of their non-violent political activity and for a review of the cases of all those arrested for taking part in the March demonstrations.□



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Students killed by troops of China's People's Liberation Army in June lie near Tiananmen Square in Beijing. Thousands of unarmed demonstrators were shot; some were crushed by advancing tanks.

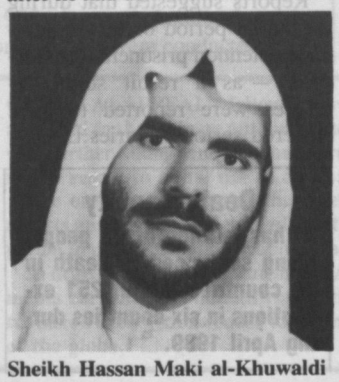
On 5 June AI appealed to governments worldwide to condemn the deliberate killing of unarmed demonstrators and to appeal urgently to the Chinese Government to stop the massacre. **(see page 7)**

SAUDI ARABIA

Shi'a scholar is freed

Sheikh Hassan Maki al-Khuwaldi, a leading religious scholar of the Shi'a community, was released on 24 April.

Over the past 10 years he had been detained on four occasions, most recently in October 1988 after he had delivered a sermon on Shi'a beliefs and history in the village of Hulaila in the Ihsa region. He was then held in the Mabahith al-'Ama Prison in al-Dammam without charge or trial for over five months.



Sheikh Hassan Maki al-Khuwaldi

In April AI appealed to the authorities on his behalf, stating that he may have been arrested solely for the non-violent expression of his political beliefs.

Although AI welcomes Sheikh Khuwaldi's release, it is concerned about the continued detention without charge or trial, since April 1988, of over 40 Shi'a activists in the Mabahith al-'Ama Prison in Riyadh.□

USSR

Death penalty imposed despite draft laws

At least three people have received death sentences from Soviet courts since draft laws that would exempt them from the death penalty were published in December 1988. It is not known if any of them have been executed.

In May a 70-year-old man, Fyodor Zykov, was reported to have been sentenced to death for war crimes.

In April Tamara Ivanyutina was sentenced to death for murder; AI believes she is only the fourth woman to have received a death sentence in the USSR since 1979.

In December 1988 a Turkmenian book-keeper, Redzhep Durdyyev, was sentenced to death for embezzlement.

These death sentences have come to light since the authorities published proposals to exempt men over the age of 60 years and all women from the death penalty and to abolish the death penalty for "economic" offences, such as embezzlement and taking bribes.

The proposals were made in draft Principles of Criminal Law which are due to be discussed by the new Soviet Parliament.

The new Parliament was scheduled to meet in April but began its first session at the end of May. It is not known when its legislative program will begin.

There has been no stay on executions since in 1987 the authorities announced that they were considering abolishing the death penalty, nor have death sentences been suspended. The real number of people recently sentenced to death may be higher than the three so far recorded.

Despite official moves towards a policy of *glasnost* death penalty statistics are still secret.□

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.

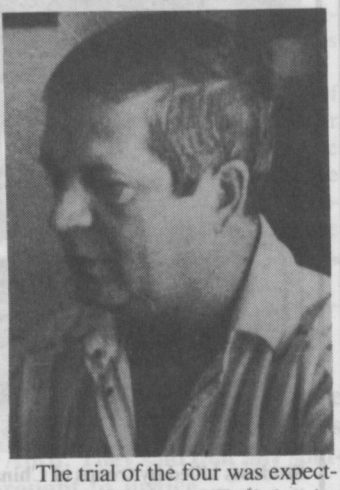
ROMANIA

Mihai Creanga, *a 47-year-old theatre critic for the magazine* Romania Pitoreasca, *was arrested in January at the state publishing house* Scinteia *in Bucharest on suspicion that he was one of the authors of a pamphlet entitled* The Disease of Power.

The pamphlet is reported to call for peaceful opposition to the administration of President Nicolai Ceausescu and to claim that the Romanian Government denies elementary human rights, favours corruption, exposes people to hunger and has created a personality cult around President Ceausescu and his wife.

Three others were arrested on the same grounds: Petre Mihai Bacanu, a journalist on the official daily newspaper *Scinteia*; Anton Uncu, also a journalist; and Alexandre Chiuoiu, a linotypist. They were reportedly taken to the headquarters of the secret police in Bucharest, where they were subjected to physical and psychological pressure to confess.

The four have been denied access to lawyers or to their families. It appears that the families of the four men have also been interrogated by the secret police and that their houses have been searched.



The trial of the four was expected to take place in March but in May AI learned that it had been postponed indefinitely.

■ Please send courteous appeals for the immediate release of Mihai Creanga and the three others to: President Nicolae Ceausescu/Calea Victoriei 49/ Bucuresti/Republica Socialista Romania.□

BRUNEI

Baha bin Mohammed: *aged about 56, has been detained without charge or trial for over 26 years.*

Baha bin Mohammed was arrested in December 1962 following an abortive rebellion by the *Partai Rakyat Brunei* (PRB) Brunei People's Party, of which he was a member.

He has been detained ever since under Emergency Orders which provide for indefinite detention without charge or trial. To AI's knowledge he was not involved in the armed conflict.

Of approximately 2,500 people who were arrested after the 1962 rebellion, only four remain in detention. They are Sarponin bin Sarpo, Suhaili bin Badas, Tinggal bin Muhammad and Baha bin Mohammed.

A fifth man, Sheikh Nikman bin Sheikh Mahmud, who was released after his arrest in 1962, was rearrested in 1975, and has since remained in detention.

The five are all now in their late 50s or older and have spent almost half their lives in detention without charge or trial. All the leaders of the rebellion have been released or have escaped abroad.

AI considers all five still in detention to be prisoners of conscience. It believes they continue to be detained as a general deterrent to opposition activity and because of their consistent refusal to sign what amounts to an admission of guilt.

■ Please send courteous letters appealing for the release of Baha bin Mohammed and the four others to: H.M.Sir Muda Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'Izzaddin Waddaulah / Istana Darul Hana / Bandar Seri Begawan / Brunei Darussalam.□

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

José Primo Esono Mica: *a 49-year old teacher, was tortured and sentenced to 30 years' imprisonment for advocating a multi-party political system in Equatorial Guinea.*

José Primo Esono Mica, who had been living in exile in Spain, returned to Equatorial Guinea in August 1988 for a visit. He was arrested three days later and accused of conspiring with others to overthrow the government of President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo.

The real reasons for his arrest appear to have been his opposition to one-party rule and his membership of an opposition party based outside the country, the *Partido del Progreso*, Progress Party, which had sought and failed to obtain permission to operate in Equatorial Guinea.

José Primo Esono Mica and four others who had recently returned to the country were among dozens of soldiers and civilians arrested in August 1988 and held in Bata, in Equatorial Guinea's mainland province.

Most of those arrested were released uncharged in early September. Three soldiers and six civilians remaining in custody appeared before a court martial, at the Okangon Cinema in Bata between 14 and 16 September 1988.

The trial was unfair: judges were soldiers appointed by the government and the rights of the defence were severely curtailed by the use of "most summary" procedures.

The accused were given little opportunity to defend themselves and the court apparently accepted self-incriminating statements made under torture as evidence against them.

The prosecution produced no proof that José Primo Esono Mica had used or advocated violence and there was little evidence of a conspiracy to overthrow the government. There was no right of appeal.

■ Please write courteous letters appealing for José Primo Esono Mica's unconditional release to: Su Excelencia/Coronel Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo/ Presidente de la República/Gabinete del Presidente de la República/Malabo/República de Guinea Ecuatorial.□

TUNISIA

Prisoners freed by head of state

On 6 May 52 detainees, mainly military and security personnel held without charge or trial since November 1987, were released following a presidential pardon granted by Head of State President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali to commemorate the Muslim festival of *'Id al-Fitr* (the end of Ramadan).

The detainees had been among more than 150 military and other personnel arrested in connection with an alleged plot to overthrow the government of former President Habib Bourguiba.

In November 1988, on the first anniversary of President Ben Ali's accession to power, 70 detainees from this group who were deemed "neither to have used or advocated violence" were released following a presidential order halting all legal proceedings against them. A further 35 detainees were released in March 1989.

AI had previously expressed concern that following the detainees' arrest some had reportedly been held incommunicado for longer than the maximum period allowed by law before being brought before an examining magistrate. In some cases they were said to have been denied representation by lawyers at hearings before the magistrate.

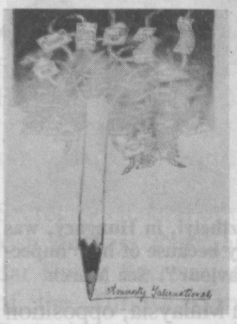
Reports suggested that during the initial period of incommunicado detention prisoners were tortured — as a result some detainees were reported to have suffered serious injuries.□

Death penalty

AI has learned of 22 people being sentenced to death in 10 countries and of 251 executions in six countries during April 1989.

FOCUS amnesty international

Prisoners of the month Update: 1988



Each month thousands of letters are written by AI supporters appealing for the release of the men, women and even children featured on page 2 of the *Amnesty International Newsletter:* prisoners of conscience imprisoned on account of their beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin, language or religion, none of whom has used or advocated the use of violence. They are held for all manner of reasons and by governments of widely differing political ideologies.

Prisoners of conscience may be sentenced to death or to long prison terms, often after unfair trials; they may be held without charge or trial, in some cases for decades; or they may simply "disappear".

The letters written on their behalf help to ensure that these prisoners are not forgotten. They keep alive hope that the prisoners will be released, able to rejoin their families and loved ones and freely exercise their fundamental human rights. In some cases the letters may be the only, or the most effective, means of achieving these aspirations.

Governments react in different ways to the letters they receive on behalf of prisoners of conscience: some remain silent; others deny that the prisoners have been unjustly treated; some deny that they are being held at all.

But sometimes, prisoners are released. The reasons why may be varied or difficult to determine, but there must be every hope that the hundreds and thousands of letters received from AI supporters across the world have played their part.

This article provides new information—where it has been gathered—about the 40 prisoners of the month whose cases were featured in 1988. Fifteen of them are now free. One of them, Michalis Maragakis, who had been imprisoned in Greece for refusing to perform military service, wrote after his release in December:

"All members of AI please accept my warmest wishes for ... great success in your work. A really big thank you for all your help..."

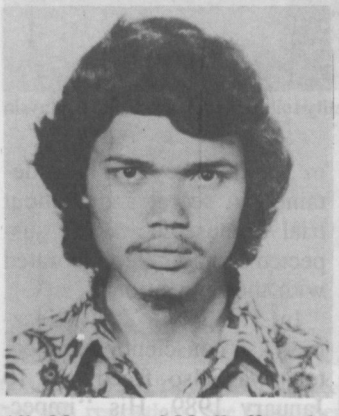
January

Ibraim Ismailov Arifov, a doctor in Bulgaria, received an eight-year prison sentence in June 1986 for urging ethnic Turks to boycott elections in protest at the government's policy of forcible assimilation. His sentence has been reduced by one year for good behaviour. Under the government's policy ethnic Turks have had to change their names and are forbidden to speak Turkish.



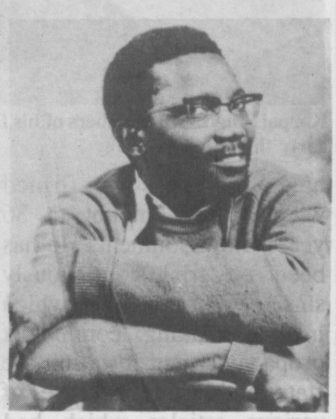


Ibraim Ismailov Arifov and his family in Bulgaria. His sentence has been reduced. See January



Ali Masrum al-Mudhoffar, in Indonesia. See January

Paraguayan lawyer Hermes Rafael Saguier was provisionally released at the end of 1987; he had been charged under a catch-all anti-subversion law which was routinely used against political opponents of the then President, Alfredo Stroessner.



Jack Mapanje, Malawi. See February

In Indonesia, Ali Masrum al-Mudhoffar continues to serve a 12-year prison sentence imposed in September 1985 for subversion. He is one of dozens of Muslims imprisoned since 1985 for being involved in a network of Islamic study groups which advocate closer ties among Muslims and a stricter adherence to the teachings of Islam. They have been accused of criticizing the state ideology.

February

Jack Mapanje, the head of Malawi University's Language and Literature Department until his arrest and the country's best known poet, has now been held for almost two years, incommunicado and without charge. His imprisonment in 1987 coincided with the banning of a book of his poems, which had passed the Censorship Board when it was published outside the country in 1981. Indefinite detention without trial is legal in Malawi and it is an offence to publish anything which "undermines government authority".

In Turkey, editor Hasan Fikret Ulusoydan is yet to



Karpal Singh with members of his family following his release in Malaysia early this year. See May

have sentences confirmed which could amount to 36 years' imprisonment. He has been on trial continuously since 1976 on charges which include making communist propaganda and insulting the state authorities because of various articles which had appeared in *Halkin Sesi* (People's Voice), a legal publication produced in the mid-1970s.



Syrian Riad al-Turk, still in prison. See March

And in China, Liu Shanqing is still serving a 10-year sentence imposed in 1983 for "counter-revolutionary" offences. A supporter of the "democracy movement" of the late 1970s, he was arrested in late 1981 after leaving Hong Kong, where he had been living, to visit his family. He has been transferred from Mei county prison to Huai Ji county prison in Guangdong Province.

March

In Chad mother and daughter Mabrouka Houni Rahil and Mardié Ibrahim were released in March. They had been detained in secret and without trial because they were suspected of having collaborated with the opposition.

In Hungary, Zsolt Keszthelyi, a conscientious objector, was also freed, on 10 January 1989. His "impeccable behaviour" was the reason for his release seven months early, press reports stated. The editor of an unofficial journal, he had been serving a two-and-a-half year sentence imposed on 27 April 1987.

Despite serious illness—partly the result of torture in custody—Syrian lawyer Riad al-Turk is still in prison. First Secretary of the prohibited Communist Party Political Bureau, he has been held since October 1980 without charge or trial. On at least two occasions Riad al-Turk has been in intensive care following torture.

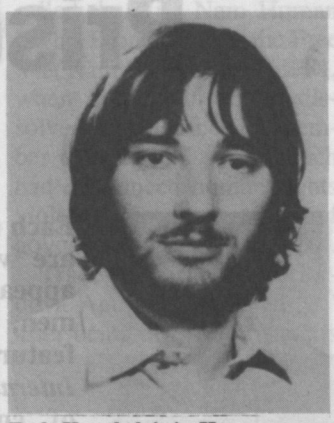
April

In Nepal, Dr Laxmi Narayan Jha was also tortured following his arrest in June 1985, according to fellow prisoners. He was one of many people arrested following bomb blasts in Kathmandu but, while most were later released, Dr Jha was one of six people who "disappeared". Nothing has been heard of him since August 1985 when his family learned, unofficially, that he was being held by police in Kathmandu.

Radio journalist Thomas Koazo in the Central African Republic was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in August 1987 for "misinforming the public". He is still in prison. He had been arrested in October 1986 and accused of rumour-mongering after reporting that President André Kolingba had met former head of state Jean-Bedel Bokassa soon after his return from exile. At Thomas Koazo's trial, however, no clear evidence was produced to indicate that the report had been incorrect.

Yugoslavian engineers Fadil Fadilpasic and Ibrahim Avdic have been released as a result of a reduction of their sentences on appeal. They had been sentenced in May 1987 to prison terms of four and two years respectively for "hostile propaganda". Both devout Muslims, they had been accused of having advocated the creation of a Muslim republic in Yugoslavia.

Finland to nine months' imprisonment which he started serving in December 1987; he was released on completing his sentence. The 16-month civilian service in Finland is twice as long as armed service for ordinary recruits.



Zsolt Keszthelyi, in Hungary, was freed early because of his "impeccable behaviour". See March

And in Malaysia, opposition member of parliament and lawyer Karpal Singh was conditionally freed on 26 January

It is always hopeful to know that somebody is working for you

—prisoner of conscience in Turkey

May

Ghazi Shashtari, a Palestinian human rights worker in Israel and the Occupied Territories, had been detained since December 1987 under two consecutive six-month administrative detention orders, the first of which was served in January 1988. He was released from administrative detention on 19 December, and although he was rearrested in late March he was held only for a few days.

Conscientious objector, Ahti Nio, was sentenced in 1989—but the restrictions were lifted in April. He had been held under the Internal Security Act on the grounds that he had carried out activities which "inflamed racial sentiments" among the country's multi-ethnic population. No charges were ever brought against him.

June

In January this year, student Yang Wei, in China, was also released although he has been deprived of his political rights for 12 months. He had been



Nihat Sargin (left) and Haydar Kutlu on trial in the Ankara State Security Court in Turkey. See June

sentenced in December 1987 to two years' imprisonment after his arrest for involvement in student protests.

Geologist Anselme Agbahoundo is still detained without charge or trial in Benin. He has been held since October 1985 for his alleged links with a banned political party and denied visits from his family and a lawyer. He is said to have been severely ill-treated on several occasions since his arrest.

You are a beacon of light in our darkest hour

—son of Malaysian prisoner of conscience

In Turkey, Dr Nihat Sargin, Secretary General of the Turkish Workers' Party, and Haydar Kutlu, Secretary General of the Turkish Communist Party, have been on trial since June 1988 in Ankara State Security Court. They were arrested on their return to Turkey in November 1987 from several years in exile and charged with being members of illegal organizations, carrying out "anti-state" activities abroad and insulting the authorities, among others.



Agripino Quispe Hilario, still in prison in Peru. See July

July

Enn Tarto in the USSR was pardoned and freed in October 1988. He had been sentenced in 1984 to 10 years' imprisonment followed by five years' internal exile for signing a letter criticizing government policies. He had opposed the construction of a new commercial port in the Estonian capital, Tallinn, arguing that economic decisions taken in Moscow had led to an influx of Russian labourers who almost outnumbered the local Estonian population.

Also freed was blind Islamic teacher *Sheikh* Nur Barud Gurhan in Somalia, who was one of nine Islamic teachers released in early May in a pardon to mark the end of Ramadan. They were among many Islamic teachers and members of Islamic congregations arrested in May 1986. He and the eight others had been sentenced to death on charges which included "exploiting religion for creating national disunity or subverting or weakening state authority", but their sentences were later commuted to unspecified terms of imprisonment.

In Peru, lay preacher and Evangelical Church member Agripino Quispe Hilario was sentenced to a prison term of six years in 1985 on charges of terrorism. Church members who saw him soon after his arrest said he told them he had confessed because he had been severely tortured. According to reports, members of Peru's Evangelical Church have frequently suffered human rights abuses.

August

Kenyan headmaster Julius Mwandawiro Mghanga remains in prison serving a five-year sentence imposed in April 1986 for possessing seditious literature. He was among a large number of suspected government opponents arrested for alleged links with the clandestine left-wing organization *Mwakenya*.

In South Korea Soh Sung is also still in prison, although his life sentence was reduced to 20 years under a presidential amnesty last December. He was convicted in 1971 on various charges including spying and acting as an *agent provocateur* for North Korea. He said he had made false confessions after being tortured.



In South Africa, Thiswilandi Rejoice Mabudafhasi was freed in January, but with restrictions. See September

In late February he went on a five-day hunger-strike calling for the release of long-term political prisoners.

A pardon led to the release of Vjenceslav Cizek on 30 July 1988 in Yugoslavia. A teacher and writer from the republic of Croatia, he had been serving a 13-year prison term since 1978 when he was convicted of "anti-state" activities.

September

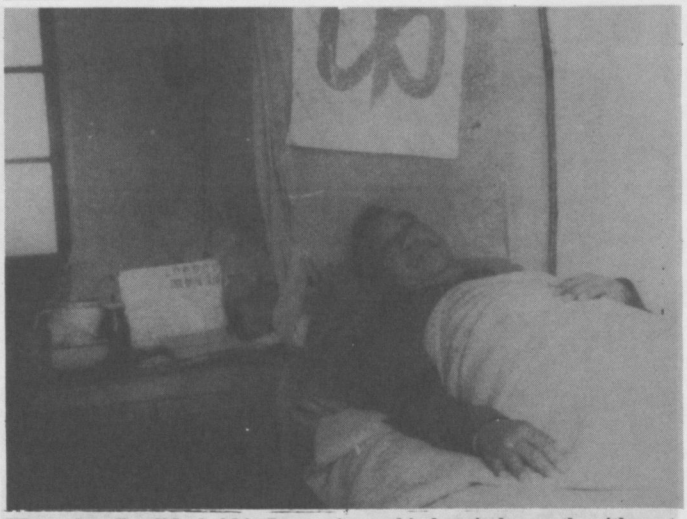
Thiswilandi Rejoice (Joyce) Mabudafhasi in South Africa was released from detention in January but only under severe restrictions. She had been detained without charge or trial for over two years in connection with her political activities. Her restrictions include not being allowed to enter

Thank you profoundly for your tireless efforts to ensure my safety and release

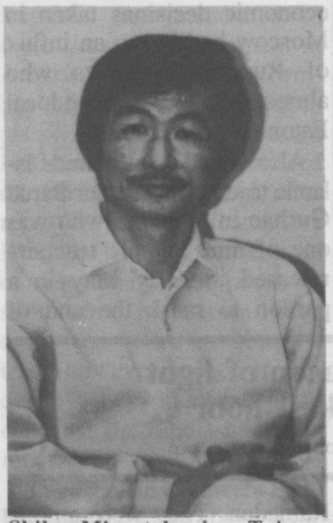
—former prisoner of conscience, Somalia



Julius Mwandawiro Mghanga is still in prison in Kenya. See August



Khamphan Pradith, held in Laos, pictured in hospital recently with acute bronchitis and a stomach ulcer. See November

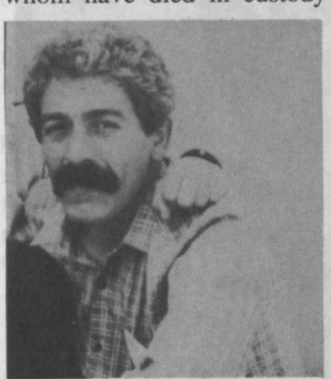


Shih Ming-teh in Taiwan, after his hunger-strike. See October

educational premises—which effectively stops her from resuming her job as a librarian at the University of the North, reporting twice daily to the police and having to stay in her home from 8pm to 6am.

Also free, following his early release on 15 March, is former government employee Mario Baldizón Avilés in Nicaragua. He has since been pardoned as a result of the government's acknowledgement of serious defects in his trial. He had served a third of a 10-year prison sentence for treason.

Three students in Syria, brothers Usama, Numair and Mazin 'Ashur al-'Askari, have now been held for over six years without charge or trial. They are among some 150 members of the prohibited Party for Communist Action who have been held since arrests in 1982 and 1983, two of whom have died in custody while others have been tortured.



Alaattin Sahin, Turkey. See November

October

In Taiwan, Shih Ming-teh, who was the manager of an opposition magazine until his arrest in 1980, is serving a 15-year prison sentence for his role in organizing a demonstration which ended in clashes between participants and riot police. Shih Ming-teh went on a series of hunger-strikes from March 1986 to November 1988 in protest against his detention.

Since January 1988 Sylvia Schmidt, a mechanic in the German Democratic Republic, has been serving a prison sentence of two years and 11 months for trying to leave the country without permission and for (later) seeking such permission.

Moussa Konaté, a teacher in Chad, is believed still to be secretly detained without charge or trial. He has been held since April 1986 following the escape of his nephew, a government opponent, from the custody of the Chad security services.

November

In Morocco, Abdelkader Amasri, a student, was one of 32 prisoners of conscience released on 6 May in an amnesty marking the end of Ramadan. He had been serving a 20-year prison sentence imposed in 1977 for belonging to an illegal association and plotting against the internal security of the state. He was one of about 170 members or former members of three Marxist groups sentenced on these charges after an unfair trial.

Alaattin Sahin, until 1977 the editor of a political journal in Turkey, is serving a 36-year prison sentence for disseminating communist propaganda, insulting the authorities and inciting others to commit crimes, in issues of the journal.

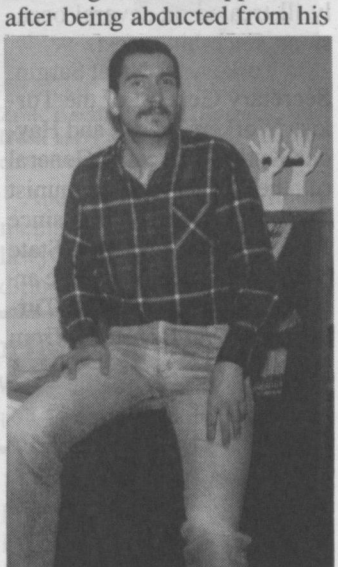
Khamphan Pradith, a former civil servant in Laos, is still being held for "re-education" in the Sop Pan camp in Houa Phanh province, despite the release last September and October of about 140 people from the same camp. He has been held since mid-1975 when he and many other civil servants presented themselves voluntarily after the authorities asked people associated with the previous regime to participate in "brief 're-education' seminars".

December

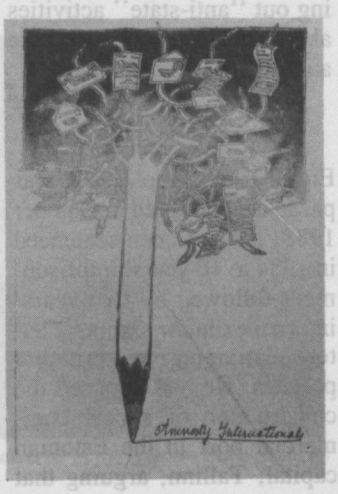
In Greece, teacher Michalis Maragakis was released from prison on 1 December 1988, where he had been serving a 26-month sentence for refusing to perform military service or unarmed military service (which is twice as long). He was given early release.

In Viet Nam the sentence of a Buddhist lay helper, Nguyen Thi Nghia, is reported to have been halved to seven years when appeals were heard by the Supreme People's Court last November. She had been sentenced in 1984 on charges of "involvement in a counter-revolutionary organization called the Viet Nam Human Rights Front and later the Free Viet Nam Force". Until 1981, when it was forcibly dissolved, she had been a member of a Buddhist sect which had denounced human rights violations under a series of governments since the 1960s.

Trade unionist Eliseo Córdova Aguilar "disappeared" after being abducted from his home in El Salvador in July 1988. Although the Treasury Police deny holding him, relatives believe that they were his captors. His wife was told by a National Guard commander to ask them about his case, and fellow trade unionists were told by an eye-witness that he had seen Eliseo Córdova in Treasury Police headquarters.□



Michalis Maragakis in prison last year. He is now free. See December



My thanks to you from the bottom of my heart

—former prisoner of conscience, South Korea

GUATEMALA

Soldiers abduct four indigenous activists

On 1 April uniformed soldiers with their faces covered in black camouflage paint broke into a room at the Trinidad Miramar estate, Suchitepéquez, in which seasonal farm workers Luis Ruiz and Macario Pu Chivalán were sleeping. They abducted the two men.

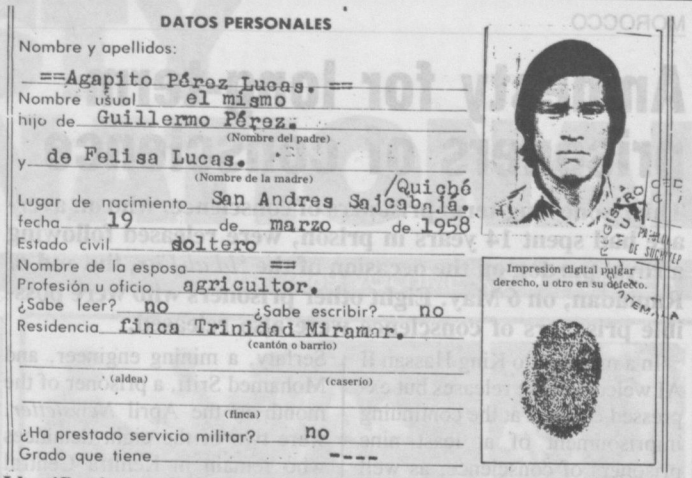
The workers were apparently seized because of their membership of the *Consejo de Comunidades Étnicas* "Runujel Junam" (CERJ), Council of Indigenous Communities, "We are all Equal," founded in 1988 to work for the protection of the rights of Guatemala's indigenous people.

Eye-witnesses told AI that the soldiers responsible had been seen some days earlier patrolling the estate and were later recognized manning an army roadblock.

On 7 April two more CERJ members, Agapito Pérez Lucas and Nicolás Mateo, were abducted from the same estate, again by uniformed soldiers in camouflage paint. Writs of *habeas corpus* have been filed on behalf of the four men but they are still missing.

The Guatemalan Government has not responded to calls from AI to President Vinicio Cerezo for the peasants' detention to be acknowledged and for their whereabouts to be made known.

There were hopes that President Cerezo's civilian government would bring human rights abuse under control. However his administration has done little to investigate past abuses and after an initial decrease there has been a resurgence in abductions, "disappearances" and political killings. Victims have included trade unionists, academics, priests and Indian villagers.


DATOS PERSONALES

Nombre y apellidos: ==Agapito Pérez Lucas.==

Nombre usual: el mismo

hijo de: Guillermo Pérez. (Nombre del padre)

y de Felisa Lucas. (Nombre de la madre)

Lugar de nacimiento: San Andres Sajcabaja. /Quiché

fecha: 19 de marzo de 1958

Estado civil: soltero

Nombre de la esposa: ==

Profesión u oficio: agricultor.

¿Sabe leer? no ¿Sabe escribir? no

Residencia: finca Trinidad Miramar. (cantón o barrio)

(aldea) (caserío)

(finca)

¿Ha prestado servicio militar? no

Grado que tiene: ----

Impresión digital pulgar derecho, u otro en su defecto.

Identification card of Agapito Pérez Lucas, one of four workers abducted from the Trinidad Miramar estate.

In June AI published a report—*Guatemala: Human Rights Violations Under the Civilian Government*—based on a memorandum sent in April to President Cerezo. This proposed measures the organization believed were needed to return Guatemala to the rule of law.□

UNITED KINGDOM

Gibraltar inquest: the unanswered question

In April AI issued a report on an inquest into the killing in March 1988 of three unarmed members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) in Gibraltar.

The document—*Investigating Lethal Shootings: The Gibraltar Inquest*—concluded that the inquest had failed to answer the most important question: whether the three were killed as a result of a policy of planned killings of suspected members of armed opposition groups.

The three were shot by soldiers of the Special Air Services (SAS) regiment of the British Army. The British Government said Mairead Farrell, Daniel McCann and Sean Savage had planned a bombing; explosives were later found in Spain.

Eye-witnesses alleged that the three had not been challenged and that no attempt had been made to arrest them. AI was concerned that the killings may have been extrajudicial executions.

AI observers at the September 1988 inquest found that the proceedings were conducted fairly by the coroner but had failed to bring out the full facts. The jury found the killings lawful. The coroner explicitly discouraged the jury from reaching an open verdict — one which does not reach a conclusion on how death occurred.

Given the complex and contradictory evidence presented and the absence of crucial evidence, AI believes that it was wrong to discourage such a verdict.

In recent years AI has called for a full judicial inquiry into disputed killings carried out in Northern Ireland since 1982, with particular reference to procedures used to investigate such incidents and to legislation governing the use of lethal force.

AI now believes such an inquiry should also review the effectiveness of the Gibraltar inquest and the British Government's overall response to the Gibraltar killings.□

CHINA: AI APPEAL—following army action in Beijing on 4 June AI appealed to the Chinese authorities to take all possible measures to prevent further killings and to issue instructions to troops and security forces not to resort to lethal use of force against peaceful protesters.

The organization feared that there might be large-scale arbitrary arrests and that those detained, particularly those suspected of participation in peaceful demonstrations, faced torture and other ill-treatment.

In urgent messages to its members AI said: "It is important for governments carrying out human rights violations to be made aware of the revulsion such actions cause to ordinary men and women in every part of the globe."□

SYRIA

Lawyers freed after nine years

Salim 'Aqil, Thuraya 'Abd al-Karim and 'Abd al-Majid Manjouneh, three lawyers detained without charge or trial since 1980 and adopted by AI as prisoners of conscience, were released from prison near Damascus at the end of April.

The releases were announced in the run-up to the 17th conference of the Arab Lawyers' Union (ALU), due to be held in Damascus in June. They were believed to have been a gesture to the conference.

The three lawyers had been arrested following a one-day national strike organized by the Syrian Bar Association in March 1980 which was supported by other professional organizations.

Among other things the strike called for an end to the state of emergency in force in Syria since 1963, the release or fair trial of all political prisoners, and the abolition of state security courts.

Ten other lawyers arrested in 1980 and adopted as prisoners of conscience by AI were released from untried detention in November 1986 in accordance with undertakings given by Syrian President Hafez al-Assad to an ALU delegation in Damascus in May 1986.□

AI visit to Viet Nam

Two delegates from AI visited the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam in May—the first time the organization had been given visas to visit the country since 1979.

The delegates discussed human rights with senior officials including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Nguyen Co Thach, Vice President Nguyen Huu Tho and Minister of Justice Phan Hien.

AI also met senior judicial figures and representatives of the Viet Nam Lawyers Association.

The delegates raised the issue of the imprisonment of religious leaders, writers and others AI believes to be prisoners of conscience, and the use of "re-education" for former members of the civilian administraton and armed forces of the Republic of Viet Nam held since 1975.□



Nguyen Chi Thien, a prisoner of conscience whose case was raised by the AI delegation.

MOROCCO

Amnesty for long-term prisoners of conscience

Thirty-one long-term prisoners of conscience, who on average had spent 14 years in prison, were released following a royal pardon on the occasion of the *'Id al-Fitr*, the end of Ramadan, on 6 May. Eight other prisoners who were possible prisoners of conscience were also released.

In a message to King Hassan II AI welcomed the releases but expressed concern at the continuing imprisonment of at least nine prisoners of conscience, as well as a number of other possible prisoners of conscience.

Among those released was Abdelkader Amasri, a philosophy graduate; Ahmed El Fessas, a secondary school teacher; Abdelfatah Fakihani, a teacher; and Hassan El Bou, who before his arrest worked as a teacher at a hospital. All had been featured as prisoners of the month in the AI *Newsletter*. However, Abraham Serfaty, a mining engineer, and Mohamed Srifi, a prisoner of the month in the April *Newsletter*, were two of the eight detainees who remain in Kenitra Central Prison.

Also still in prison was Ali Idrissi Kaitouni, a painter and poet sentenced in 1982 after the publication of a collection of his poetry.

The 31 belong to a group of about 200 members and former members of a coalition of three Marxist groups known as the *Frontistes*, who were detained between 1974 and 1976. They were reportedly held incommunicado for long periods and a number were tortured before being brought to trial in January 1977 on charges of belonging to an illegal association and plotting against the internal security of the Moroccan state.

An AI observer who attended the trial reported that prisoners' rights of defence were severely restricted and that proceedings had fallen far short of international standards for a fair trial.□



A group of prisoners photographed at Kenitra Central Prison in 1983. Driss Bouissef (third from left, standing) and Mohammed Laghrisi (second from right, standing) were among those recently released.

UGANDA

Army abuses under investigation

Allegations of torture and killing of prisoners by soldiers are currently being investigated, officials told two AI delegates who visited the country in late April. They said that any soldiers found guilty would be brought to justice.

During the visit AI's delegates, Secretary General Ian Martin and a staff member, met President Yoweri Museveni and other government officials.

The visit came only a month after AI published a report—*Uganda: the Human Rights Record, 1986-1989* — which described efforts to protect human rights since President Museveni's government took power in January 1986. The report also detailed continuing human rights abuses by the Ugandan army.

Officials contested allegations that some prisoners were held incommunicado in military barracks. Shortly after AI's report was published, the Ugandan Government provided detailed comments on reports of abuses committed in 1986 and 1987.

A commission of inquiry investigating reports of killings of civilians by soldiers in Gulu district in late 1988 is due to publish its findings soon.□

SINGAPORE

Detainee released after 22 years

Chia Thye Poh was released from detention in Singapore on 17 May; he had spent over 22 years in jail without ever having been charged or tried.

At the time of his release, however, conditions were placed on 48-year-old Chia Thye Poh's freedom: he has been banished to the island of Sentosa and his restrictions include not taking part in any organization or association, or in any political activity without government approval.

The Singapore Government alleged that Chia Thye Poh was a member of the illegal Communist Party of Malaya, which he has always denied.

AI believed that he had been detained because of his role in the opposition party *Barisan Sosialis*, Socialist Front, in the 1960s.



Chia Thye Poh

At the time of his detention Chia Thye Poh was a *Barisan Sosialis* Member of Parliament.□

INDIA

Seven prisoners "disappear"

AI has called on the Indian Government to clarify reports of seven "disappearances" that occurred during 1987 and 1988.

The victims include Puran Singh, Shyam Singh, Veer Singh and Tilak Ram, who were reportedly arrested in April 1987 in the state of Uttar Pradesh as common criminal suspects.

In Punjab, Balwinder Singh, Manjit Singh and Jatinder Pal Singh—all political activists—were arrested in mid-January 1988 on suspicion of involvement in political violence.

AI has received reports from eye-witnesses to suggest that all seven of the "disappeared" were taken away by police personnel, some of whom were dressed in plain clothes.

Police officials apparently first acknowledged some of the detentions but later denied them.

According to newspaper reports at least one of the four arrested in Uttar Pradesh died after being tortured by New Delhi Police. In Punjab eye-witnesses claimed that they saw the three who "disappeared in January 1988 being held in Mayi Ki Sarai Interrogation Centre.

Although some police investigations were carried out, there has been no independent investigation into these "disappearances".

Indian law provides safeguards against "disappearances". India's highest courts have held officials responsible for "disappearances" in several cases and granted redress to the relatives of the victims—but such instances are rare and no officials are known to have been prosecuted in such cases.

Habeas corpus provides a remedy against arbitrary arrest but can only be requested of higher courts.

The cases of two political activists who were reported to have "disappeared" for 74 and 47 days respectively illustrate how disregard for legal safeguards may occur. S. Veeramani, Secretary of the Progressive Youth Centre in Bangalore, Karnataka, was brought before a magistrate two-and-a-half months after arrest; until then he had been kept incommunicado and, he said, had been tortured. The authorities refused to acknowledge his detention.

Avtar Singh Sidhu was kept in detention in Punjab for 47 days without officials even recording his imprisonment.

Both men were released following newspaper coverage of their "disappearance" and pressure from members of parliament, lawyers and human rights workers.□

Prisoner news

AI learned in May 1989 of the release of 59 prisoners under adoption or investigation. AI took up 105 cases.

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