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Czech committee arrested **Human rights activists to be tried**

Ten members of an unofficial Czech human rights group, now in pre-trial detention in Prague, are facing possible prison terms ranging from three to 10 years. *AI* announced on 27 June that it would ask the Government of Czechoslovakia for permission to observe the trial.

The defendants, who were arrested on 29 May, are all members of the Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (known in Czechoslovakia as VONS). The committee, formed in April 1978 by signatories of Charter 77, had issued 113 statements on human rights violations in Czechoslovakia up to the time that its members were arrested.



Left to right: Dana Nemcova, Jiri Dienstbier, Vaclav Havel, Dr Jiri Nemecek, Petr Uhl. The other VONS defendants are: Otta Rednarova, Dr Vaclav Benda, Dr Ladislav Lis, Jarmila Belikova and Vaclav Maly.

According to a statement issued by the committee when it was founded, its purpose has been "to monitor the cases of people who are prosecuted or imprisoned for the expression of their convictions or who have become victims of arbitrary actions by the police or judiciary".

All the defendants have been charged under article 98 (2b) of the

Czechoslovak penal code with conducting subversion on a large scale. They face sentences of between 3 and 10 years' imprisonment.

AI has adopted all 10 as prisoners of conscience. Their detention infringes the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Czechoslovakia has ratified

New submissions to the United Nations

The United Nations has been presented with new information this year from *AI* on human rights violations in eight countries.

On 31 May, *AI* submitted reports to the UN of "a consistent pattern of gross and reliably attested violations of human rights" in Afghanistan, Argentina, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Paraguay, Tunisia, Uganda (under President Amin) and Uruguay.

The *AI* submissions will be examined by the UN Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities in August.

The reports may then be forwarded to the UN Commission on Human Rights which may decide to conduct a thorough study or investigation of the human rights situation in any of the countries. The commission is also empowered to conduct on-the-spot investigations.

This is the first time that *AI* is making a submission in the case of Afghanistan and Tunisia.

- The draft Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials (August 1976 *Newsletter*) will be on the agenda of the UN General Assembly at its forthcoming session in September

Indochina refugees face expulsion and repatriation

Between 8 and 12 June Thai troops forcibly repatriated more than 40,000 refugees who had fled from Kampuchea to Thailand since January 1979. According to unconfirmed reports, between 300 and 1,000 of these refugees were killed by Thai troops when they resisted being sent back.

On 15 June the Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia said his government would expel Vietnamese boat people temporarily settled in UN-administered refugee camps and would deny, by means including gunfire, access to further refugees attempting to enter Malaysian waters.

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On 18 June the Malaysian Government declared it would not carry out its extreme policy of expulsion and denial of entry. However, it was later announced that between 18 June and 1 July nearly 15,000 Vietnamese refugees had been turned back or shipped out into international waters.

The Malaysian Government has rejected a French appeal to accept all Vietnamese boat people arriving on its shores pending the UN conference.

On 25 June the Thai Prime Minister, General Kriangsak Chamanand, said that his government would temporarily halt the repatriation of Kampuchean refugees pending the outcome of the UN-sponsored conference on the problem of Indochinese refugees to be held in Geneva on 20-21 July.

AI has asked its national sections to request their countries' governments to announce without delay that they will accept substantially increased quotas of Indochina refugees

Algeria

Former President Ahmed BEN BELLA was released on 5 July 1979 after spending more than 14 years as a prisoner of conscience. Until his release he was among the longest serving political prisoners in the Middle East.

He was removed from power by a coup in 1965 and held without trial under house arrest despite repeated international appeals on his behalf□

China

AI learned in mid-June of the release of ZHENG Chaolin, the 78-year-old former Trotskyist leader and political theorist who had been imprisoned in Shanghai since 1952 (*May Campaign for Prisoners of the Month*).

Little information is as yet available about his release. However, according to the first report received by *AI*, Zheng Chaolin was released in early June together with his wife and has been allowed to live in Shanghai□

El Salvador

Two British bankers, Ian MASSIE and Michael CHATTERTON, who were held hostage by FARN guerrillas in El Salvador, were released on 4 July.

Twice during the almost eight months that the two men were held in captivity, FARN threatened to execute them. On these occasions *AI* issued public statements to the Central American news media, urging FARN not to execute the prisoners.

On 24 March in a statement published in the Mexican press, a FARN representative said that the guerrillas had decided not to kill the bankers

Releases

after they had learned of the appeals by *AI*, the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Salvadorean Human Rights Committee□

Liberia

President William TOLBERT of Liberia announced an amnesty on 26 June for all detainees arrested after the 14 April demonstration in the capital, Monrovia, when police opened fire on demonstrators protesting against an increase in the price of rice. Official figures put the death toll at 41 with over 500 seriously wounded.

In the days following the demonstration the government published notices throughout Monrovia offering a \$5,000 reward for the capture of student and opposition leaders. A writ of arrest for 33 people on charges of treason was also issued.

AI received reports that some 300 people had been detained throughout the country on suspicion of sympathy with the demonstrators and with the Progressive Alliance of Liberia which organized the demonstration.

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AI sent several appeals for the release of the detainees to the Liberian authorities. On 27 June *AI* was notified by President Tolbert that all those

arrested for "direct or indirect" involvement in the demonstration had been amnestied.

AI remains concerned at the provisions of the Emergency Powers Act introduced by the government on 24 April. This act suspends the right of *habeas corpus* for one year and provides the government with unlimited powers of search, arrest and detention. The minimum penalty for "subverting, disturbing or upsetting the economic, social and political stability and security of the State" is 10 years' imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine□

Tanzania

James MAGOTI, a detainee and victim of torture (September 1978 *Newsletter*), was released from prison in mid-June. He had been detained without charge or trial since December 1976 under Tanzania's Preventive Detention Act. On 10 July 1978 two security officers were sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment after being found guilty of assaulting Mr Magoti while he was in police custody.

Mr Magoti's younger brother, Adam, a student at Nairobi University, who was arrested and tortured at the same time in November 1976, died in detention on 1 June this year□

Vietnam

AI has been informed by the Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam that Bui Tuong HUAN (April, *Campaign for Prisoners of the Month*) has been released. The former law professor had been held in a "re-education" camp since the autumn of 1975□

Laos

Government responds to *AI* appeal

AI has received letters from the Embassies of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in the United Kingdom and in Australia after the publication of information on Khamkhing SOUVANLASY (March *Campaign for Prisoners of the Month*).

Mr Souvanlasy is one of many former Laotian officials who have been held in "re-education" camps since 1975.

According to the letters received by *AI*, "after the take-over of power had

been completed" the government "deemed it necessary" to send some former officials, soldiers and members of the police forces of the old regime "for re-education and thought reform" to enable them to "contribute constructively to the building of our beloved country". The government of Laos said it did not consider "re-education" to be an act of punishment or confinement—"the welfare, livelihood and health of everyone undergoing reform have been constantly attended

to by the government".

However, *AI* has received reports about detainees in "re-education" camps who are in bad health due to lack of proper medical attention or, in some cases, to strenuous work and insufficient nutrition over a long period.

AI has previously written to the Laotian government about people held in "re-education" camps for political reasons, urging that they should be released immediately and unconditionally□

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.

Reverend MOON Ik-hwan, Republic of Korea

A 61-year-old minister in the Presbyterian Church of South Korea is now serving his second term of imprisonment as a prisoner of conscience.

Reverend MOON Ik-hwan, a founder of Galilee Church—a congregation of people active in the movement for democracy in South Korea—was originally sentenced in 1977 to 5 years' imprisonment for his part in the *Myong-Dong Declaration* that called for the release of political prisoners and the restoration of civil liberties in South Korea. The signatories of the declaration, who included former president Yo Po-son, Quaker leader Hahm Suk-hon and former presidential candidate Kim Dae-jung, were charged with agitating to overthrow the government.

When the sentences were announced Reverend Moon and a number of other prominent Koreans re-issued the declaration and more than a hundred people were arrested. Reverend Moon was sentenced under Emergency Decree Number 9 which prohibits any criticism of or opposition to the country's constitution, or any attempt to revise it or advocate its revision.

Reverend Moon protested against his imprisonment by going on hunger strike. On 31 December 1977 his sentence was suspended and he was released from prison.

Reverend Moon continued his involvement in human rights questions in South Korea, becoming Vice-Chairman of the Coalition for the Human Rights Movement in Korea.

In July and October 1978 he was held for interrogation by the Korean Central Intelligence Agency in connection with his human rights activities. On 28 October he was arrested and returned to prison to serve the remaining 3 years of his earlier sentence. In protest, he went on hunger strike for 22 days in prison in December.

Please write courteously-worded appeals for the immediate release of

Reverend MOON Ik-hwan to: His Excellency President Park Chung-hee, The Blue House, Chongno-gu, Seoul, Republic of Korea.

Virgilio BAREIRO RIVEROS and Severo ACOSTA ARANDA, Paraguay

Two Paraguayans have been in continuous detention without trial since they were arrested in 1964, despite an appeal for their release by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights of the Organization of American States.

Virgilio BAREIRO RIVEROS, aged 50, was head of the technical department of the National Administration of Telecommunications until his arrest on 10 August 1964. He was held incommunicado and tortured during the first months of his detention. He then spent nine years in Police Station No. 7 in the capital, Asunción, during which time he was never allowed out of his small cell.

Since October 1978 he has been held in Police Station No.3.

Sr Bareiro is married with five children aged 15 to 21. He has been allowed to see his family once a week for 10 to 20 minutes during his 15 years in detention.

He has staged several hunger strikes and now suffers from serious nervous disorders and has become extremely weak.

Severo ACOSTA ARANDA, aged 53, was arrested on 7 June 1964, allegedly for supporting the Communist Party but, like Sr Bareiro, he has never been formally charged. He is also being held in a local police station in Asunción. His five hunger strikes, each lasting several weeks, have impaired his already poor health.

Please send courteously-worded appeals for the immediate release of Virgilio Bareiro Riveros and Severo Acosta Aranda to: Exmo Sr Presidente de la República del Paraguay, General de Ejército Alfredo Stroessner, Palacio de Gobierno, Asunción, Paraguay.

True Orthodox Believers, USSR

At least 10 Soviet women are serving lengthy terms of imprisonment for their activities in the True Orthodox Church, a breakaway sect of the Russian Orthodox Church.

Members of the sect hold the view that the Soviet state is "satanic". They refuse to accept its authority, whether in the form of legislation regulating religious activities or in the allocation of jobs, residence permits or passports.

The 10 women listed below belonging to the sect have been convicted of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda", a charge designed exclusively to punish the exercise of freedom of expression.

The women's offence is reported to have consisted of actions such as leaving notes in Orthodox Churches calling on believers not to cooperate with the authorities and sending similar notes through the mail.

All are serving sentences of more than 10 years' imprisonment and exile. Seven of them have already served previous terms of imprisonment of 10 years or more on similar charges. All are held in the Mordovian complex of corrective labour colonies.

According to first-hand reports the women are regularly punished for their refusal to recognize the colony administration. They practise their religion in the camp and refuse to obey various disciplinary regulations. Punishments include incarceration in punishment cells and reduction of food rations.

Five of the women are more than 70 years of age and because of the repeated punishments their health has seriously deteriorated.

Please send courteously-worded appeals for the immediate release of these women: Tatyana Krasnova, Nadezhda Usoyeva, Maria Semyonova, Alexandra Khvatkova, Irina Kireyeva, Anastasiya Volkova, Klavdiya Volkova, Ekaterina Alyoshina, Tatyana Sokolova and Glafira Kuldysheva. Write to: SSSR, Moskva, Kreml, Generalnomu Sekretaryu, TsK KPSS i Predsedatelyu Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSR, L.I. Brezhnev.

In early July *AI* made public the personal account of a Venezuelan poet who was held for more than six years as a prisoner of conscience in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea). The poet, Sr Ali Lameda, was appointed in 1966 by the North Korean government to the Spanish section of the Department of Foreign Publications. He was arrested in September 1967 and in the following year he was placed on trial, accused of having been a foreign agent. He was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment with forced labour. Sr Lameda was adopted by *AI* as a prisoner of conscience; he was released from prison in 1974. Although he was kept in a punishment cell apart from other prisoners, Sr Lameda was able to acquire details about the camp and its prisoners from conversations with camp orderlies and other staff. His account of his experiences and observations, from which the following extracts are taken, is the first such information to be published about political imprisonment in North Korea.

Political imprisonment in North Korea

'My arrest came as a complete surprise. Only three days earlier, I had been present at a big dinner given by the Director of the Department of Foreign Publications (who was, I believe, later arrested and imprisoned in connection with the charges against me) and I was not aware of any undue tension.

Nine people came to my apartment to arrest me. Two of them were in the uniform of the police, the others were agents of what is called Public Security. I was told I was being arrested as an enemy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, having violated Korean law. Nothing more specific was said to me and they were not willing to discuss the laws or charges related to my arrest.

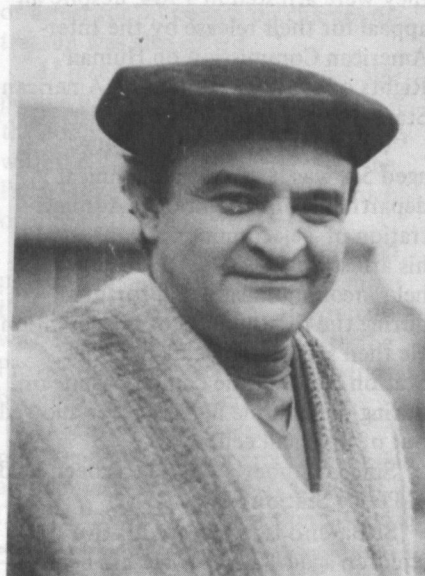
I was taken to a prison cell and interrogated by the authorities. It was demanded that I "confess". I was denied food, on occasions taken out of my cell at 12 noon and not allowed to return until midnight, during which time I was continuously interrogated.

Whilst in my cell, I could hear the cries of other prisoners. You can soon learn to distinguish whether a man is crying from fear, or pain or from madness in such a place. I could not change my clothing at all. A prisoner is soon covered in dirt, living in those filthy cells. The cells are also damp, and I should say that for eight months during my first period in detention I was sick with fever. I believe at times I lost consciousness.

The pattern of my trial followed the interrogations I had undergone. It was demanded that I confess my guilt. The tribunal did not make any specific accusations—there were no formal charges—but the accused has to accuse himself before the tribunal. Thus there was no necessity for the tribunal to produce any evidence. I had no right to defend myself; I could only admit guilt.

The basis for the tribunal's condemnations is the confession of the prisoner and the prosecutor told me that I should speak out and confess everything, to rid myself of my crimes.

I insisted that I had committed no crimes, that I had only come to Korea as a servant of the government. During the trial, I asked for a lawyer of my choice and that the tribunal should be



Ali Lameda is a distinguished poet and an active member of the Venezuelan Communist Party. Aged 55, he has published many volumes of poetry and his work is well-known in the Spanish-speaking world.

Sr Lameda first contacted the North Koreans in Berlin around 1965. At that time they were seeking people to work with them on foreign policy and were recruiting translators and editors. Sr Lameda was invited to work in Pyongyang, the capital of North Korea, arriving there in mid-1966.

On leaving Korea in 1974 he told a journalist, "They killed everything except my memory". By this he meant the 400 poems and more than 300 sonnets he had composed—without pen or paper—during his seven years' imprisonment.

made open, but such demands were dismissed as bourgeois. When I tried to ask questions, I was abruptly interrupted and told that I had no rights in defending myself.

The prosecutor eventually informed me that I had been in Korea to sabotage, spy and introduce infiltrators. To this I could only reply that I had been invited to Korea by the government and that allegations that I was under the control of the CIA were absurd.

The tribunal retired for just five minutes and then returned to sentence me to 20 years' imprisonment with forced labour.

I was transferred to the concentration camp by van, handcuffed to the bars of the van. Opposite me in the van, sitting on a chair, was the guard, who throughout the journey spent his time loading and unloading his gun in a threatening manner. The roads along which we travelled were dirt tracks. Outside, the howls of wolves could be heard.

The journey lasted about three hours and by the time I arrived at the camp I was in such a poor condition that the captain who initially received me immediately sent for medicines. I was then pushed into a filthy hole, where I slept on the bare floor, with no blanket or mattress, in freezing temperatures. This was, however, only a temporary cell, where I remained constantly handcuffed for the three weeks that I was there, so that I felt my wrists would break with the strain.

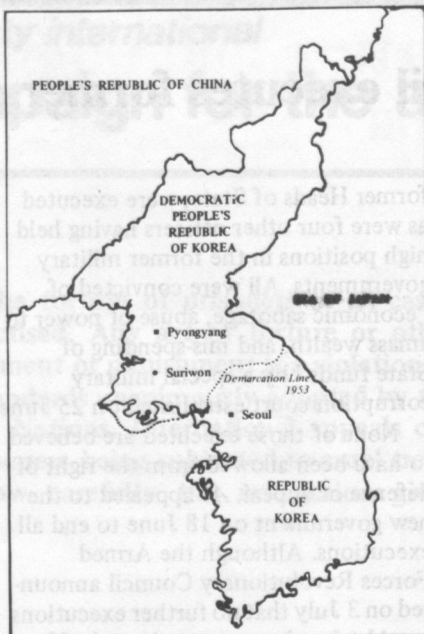
Following this, I was transferred

to the main camp, only a couple of kilometres away. This was done at about ten o'clock at night, still in the middle of winter. The cell I was then taken to again had no heating, except for a pipe running through it which became warm for approximately five minutes each night. The windows were iced up and my feet froze.

My feet remained in this condition for a month and a half; my toes were swollen with frostbite. I can still feel the effects of this to the present day. Some doctors did eventually come to see me, but by then my toenails had all dropped off and my feet were covered in sores.

I later learned that the name of the camp was Suriwon, after the nearby town, and that I had been put in a punishment cell, which should not really have happened, but since I was a foreigner, and it was the first time a foreigner had ever been held at the camp, there was no isolated cell in which to hold me.

There were some 6,000 or more people held at the camp, according to information gleaned from the guards or orderlies. Some of the guards and orderlies would communicate with the prisoners. Apparently the camp was a huge circular place with an enormous courtyard. One doctor told me that



there were about 1,200 people sick in the camp, who were kept in a special part, so with that large number sick, I calculated, using all the information I could gather, that the total number of prisoners would be no lower than 6,000 to 8,000 people. The prisoners were forced to work for 12 hours a day, mechanical work, making jeeps for example, which was, of course, unpaid. There was no agricultural work done

at this camp. But outside the camp there were several farms worked by political prisoners, and potatoes, root vegetables, pumpkins and 'ahuyama' were grown there.

According to a man whom I met whilst at this camp there were as many as 15,000 people detained throughout the whole country. It was possible to piece together little scraps of information that the guards let slip. I calculated that, if in the camp in which I was detained, there were about 6,000 to 8,000 inmates, and that in the whole of North Korea there may be as many as 20 such camps, including places where women prisoners were kept, the total prison and camp population would be in the region of 150,000, comprising both political and criminal prisoners.

The main source of my information was the orderlies, who were themselves prisoners but who, through good behaviour, had won the privilege of becoming an orderly. They still had to work hard, but at least they could move around the camp, serving the meals three times a day. Some of the orderlies had even been in other camps before being transferred to Suriwon, so I could be sure of the existence of other similar camps.'

'I have been released. . .'

AI has received a letter from a former political prisoner in Brazil who has been released after eight years in detention and prison. Antonio Ricardo Braz was one of a group of 15 prisoners held in Itamaracá prison, in Brazil's northeast province of Pernambuco. The 43-year-old peasant was severely tortured and eventually sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment under the Law of National Security. AI investigated the case and is now providing medical assistance.

I am deeply grateful to the Amnesty International movement, through whose efforts I have been released—in addition to those fellow prisoners who will be released in the near future. And credit goes to you, friends and members of Amnesty International. I call you companheiros (comrades) because I consider myself a friend of all of you. . . Although the reactionary class accused me of being a terrorist, I was never a terrorist. I am not in agreement with terrorism. Political terrorism is wrong: my politics is one of liberation of all political prisoners, of those in exile and those who have disappeared.

I was released on 28 May 1979 and found myself quite ill as a result of the tortures I was subjected to. I am suffering from the after effects in my spine, hearing and sight. I have submitted 35 applications for

an operation but up to the present time I have not been looked after. I would like to appeal for help to you, my friends at Amnesty International, since my situation is one of the worst among the present and past political prisoners. I am unemployed because of my health. I am the father of six children under age and I live in a hut without light, without water and without sanitary facilities. I have no one to turn to except to those who belong to the Amnesty International movement.

I hope to be assisted by you, my companheiros, for which I am grateful.

I send regards to all my friends who are part of the Amnesty International movement and I hope that you are all well. I send you all good wishes.

*Cordially,
Antonio Ricardo Braz*

Ghana Revolutionary Council executes former Heads of State

The Armed Forces Revolutionary Council of Ghana, led by Flight Lieutenant Jerry RAWLINGS, the country's new military ruler since 4 June 1979, has carried out the execution of three former Heads of State and five other high-ranking officers associated with previous military regimes.

On 16 June 1979 former President, General Ignatius ACHEAMPONG and Lieutenant-General Emmanuel UTUKA, former head of the border police, were executed outside the capital, Accra. Both had been convicted by a military tribunal of "misusing government office to amass wealth and dissipating state funds to the detriment of the nation".

On 26 June 1979 General Fred AKUFFO and Akwasi AFRIFA, both

former Heads of State, were executed as were four other officers having held high positions in the former military governments. All were convicted of "economic sabotage, abuse of power to amass wealth, and mis-spending of State funds" by a special military corruption court established on 25 June.

None of those executed are believed to have been allowed from the right of defence or appeal. *AI* appealed to the new government on 18 June to end all executions. Although the Armed Forces Revolutionary Council announced on 3 July that no further executions would take place, approximately 50 people, all associated with previous regimes, are being held on charges of economic mismanagement or corruption. □

Iraq Religious leaders arrested

At least 25 religious leaders of the Sunni and the Shii communities in Iraq were arrested during June either for criticizing the Iraqi authorities or supporting the new government of Iran.

Three are Sunni religious leaders, including Sheikh Abdul Malik AL SA'ADI from Falluja, the President of the League of Ulema, who is reported to have been arrested after criticizing the authorities during a sermon.

A Shii religious leader, Ayatollah Muhammad Bakr AL SADR from Najaf, was arrested briefly on 12 June reportedly because of his support for the Iranian government. He has since been under strict house arrest and his health is said to be deteriorating because doctors' visits are not allowed. Twenty-one others, including representatives of the Ayatollah and his close relatives, are reported to have been arrested on 15 June. Demonstrations which took place in a number of towns in protest

at the Ayatollah's detention resulted in further arrests. One of those arrested, Abdul Amir MASHKUR, is reported to have died in custody on 23 June.

On 2 July *AI* wrote to President Ahmad Hassan AL BAKR of Iraq expressing concern that the religious leaders appear to have been arrested for exercising their right of freedom of opinion and expression—a right guaranteed in the Interim Constitution of Iraq and in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which Iraq has ratified.

AI considers the arrested men to be prisoners of conscience. *AI* has urged the Iraqi government to release all those still in detention or to supply information about those who are to be charged with offences under the law. *AI* called on the government to establish an independent commission of inquiry to investigate the reported death in custody of Abdul Amir Mashkur. □

Syria Death sentences and executions

Death sentences have been imposed recently on members of the Moslem Brotherhood in Syria.

The Syrian Minister of the Interior has accused the Moslem Brotherhood of carrying out a number of assassinations and acts of violence over the past three years including the massacre of some 50 military cadets on 16 June this year.

On 26 June *AI* appealed on behalf of 14 people sentenced to death in Aleppo in the north of Syria. Three days later *AI* expressed concern at the execution of 15 people in Damascus.

Although the appeals involve different groups of prisoners, *AI* is concerned that in none of the cases did the accused receive a fair trial and that they were probably tried *in camera* with only limited access to defence counsel.

The death penalty in Syria has recently been carried out only for acts of sabotage, murder or assault. □

USSR Four face death

The Supreme Court of the Ukrainian Republic has upheld the death sentence passed on 28 August 1978 by the Donetsk regional court against Rafael ADJIASTIVILI, Elia MIKHAILISHVILI, Gabriel SPIASHVILI and a Mr ABASSOV.

The four were among 50 people convicted of stealing surplus textiles from a factory and selling them for private gain. All four of the men are Jews.

Under Soviet law the condemned men may be executed at any time unless they petition for clemency, which may be granted by the Chairman of the USSR Supreme Soviet Presidium, Leonid BREZHNEV.

On 16 July *AI* publicly appealed to Mr Brezhnev to commute the sentences.

The case highlights the fact that Soviet citizens can be sentenced to death for crimes not involving violence. □

Peru Death penalty abolished

In a 307-article constitution drafted and approved by Peru's Constituent Assembly during its final session in the second week of July, the death penalty was abolished for all offences in peacetime. The penalty has been retained

solely for cases of people convicted of treason in time of war. The new constitution will come into force in July 1980 when a civilian government takes over from the current military administration. □

Prisoner Releases and Cases

The International Secretariat learned in June of the release of 101 prisoners under adoption or investigation and took up 138 new cases.



amnesty international

campaign for the abolition of torture

appeal

Amnesty International opposes the torture of prisoners in all cases, wherever and whenever it is practised. Any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment is a violation of the international human rights standards unanimously adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations. International appeals can help to alleviate the plight of prisoners being subjected to cruel treatment. Your letters should follow carefully the instructions given below.

Colombia

Brother and sister held by military

A 19-year-old nurse who has previously been a victim of torture at the hands of the armed forces of Colombia has been arrested with her brother. Both were taken to Bogota's *Brigada de Institutos Militares* (Brigade of Military Institutes)—a center frequently mentioned in testimonies of torture in Colombia.

Dora Patricia Durán, who has worked for the Red Cross in Colombia was first arrested in Medellín in March 1978, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment by a military court on charges of rebellion. Her family was not permitted to visit her after her arrest allegedly because she had been badly tortured while in detention.

She was released on 6 April this year after completing her sentence. However, she was re-arrested on 15 May and again reported to have been subjected to torture. At the end of May she was released only to be detained again several days later, together with her mother.

Her mother, Teresa de Durán, describes her daughter's most recent arrest: "At 5 o'clock in the morning I heard strange noises. . . the house was surrounded by men carrying all sorts of weapons. They said they were looking for Dora Patricia and Alvaro. . . I embraced my daughter. . . I told the military, "If you take her, I'm coming with her." They blindfolded us and insulted us. From 7 o'clock in the morning until 7 o'clock at night we had to stand. We embraced each other and cried. I was trying to encourage her even if I felt that I was about to faint. Then they separated us brutally. . . I could hear screams but I could not see what they were doing to her because



Teresa: mother of Dora and Alvaro Durán

I was blindfolded. This is enough to make you go mad."

Teresa de Durán was later released. When she returned home she learned that her son had also been arrested. The first she heard of his arrest was when he called his mother at home saying that he needed legal assistance.

It is believed that Dora and Alvaro Durán are both held at the *Brigada de Institutos Militares*—the military have given no reason for their arrest.

Dora Durán is reported to be suffering from arthritis, bronchitis, an ulcer and kidney pains, largely as a consequence of her treatment in prison.

Please send courteously-worded letters urging that medical attention be given to Dora Durán and that all legal and physical safeguards be guaranteed for her and her brother. Write to: General Miguel Vega Uribe, Brigada de Institutos Militares, Carrere 7, calle 103, Usaquén, Bogotá, Colombia.

Argentina

No news of students

Three students at Mariano Acosta high school in Buenos Aires are still missing after being abducted while studying at the home of a friend.



Jorge Victor Sznneider, 19

The youths were seized on 13 May when a group of armed men in civilian clothing entered the apartment building and arrested them. The men informed the janitor of the building that they were police but efforts by the parents to locate the students have been unsuccessful and the government has not acknowledged the detentions.

Arrested with the students were Carlos Alberto Perez, 33, his 35-year-old wife Mirta Silber and Noemi Graciela Beitone, a 26-year-old assistant in a pharmacy. All six were reported to be eating supper together when they were abducted by the armed men. On 30 May AI launched an Urgent Action appeal on behalf of the missing people.

Nicaragua

Prisoners released

An AI member has received a letter from a member of the Red Cross of Nicaragua who was detained in the town of Esteli in late 1978. AI members participated in an Urgent Action appeal in an effort to prevent the torture of the detained Red Cross workers.

I wish to thank you and AI for the measures you have taken to gain the liberty of the prisoners in Nicaragua and very especially for myself and Dr Alejandro Dávila Bolanos who were detained in the prisons of Esteli. On 12 December 1978 we were released thanks to the good offices of yourselves, the Red Cross and the Churches of Nicaragua. . . By means of a clipping from the newspaper Uno más Uno in Mexico I read that you had sent a letter asking for my liberty. . .

Sincerely, Ivan Miranda Kauffmann

Political arrests, torture and killings continue in Ethiopia

Political arrests, torture and killings continue to be reported from Ethiopia, although not on the massive scale of the government's "red terror" campaign of early 1978. The most recent victims have been members of Protestant evangelical and pentecostal churches, accused of being counter-revolutionaries and imperialists, and Eritreans and Oromos suspected of opposing the government's "nationalities policy" and of supporting armed opposition movements in the country.

On 1 May approximately one hundred Oromo political prisoners were taken from prison in Dire Dawa, a town just over 300 km northwest of the capital, Addis Ababa. The prisoners were machine-gunned to death by soldiers and their bodies displayed in public.

Similar killing of detainees also took place on the following day. The victims were alleged to be supporters of the Oromo Liberation Front which is active in the area.

During May and June hundreds of members of the evangelical Mekane Yesus Church and of small Pentecostal churches were arrested by local political officials in Addis Ababa and Nazareth. Arrests also took place in the provinces of Kaffa, Shoa, Gemu Goffa and Wollega.

torture

Those arrested were accused of various offences such as opposing the revolution. Many are reported to have been tortured.

The victims were tied and swung from a horizontal bar and then beaten on the buttocks and the soles of the feet.

The leaders of the Mekane Yesus Church, which has more than 400,000 members throughout the country, were released unharmed after a few weeks but others—mostly youths—are reported to have been forced under torture to sign statements renouncing their religious beliefs and confessing to "counter-revolutionary crimes".

Although the Ethiopian government denies that there is any systematic persecution of religious communities, official documents accuse the evangelical and pentecostal churches of opposing the revolution and attacks of this kind upon church members during the last year by local bodies evidently have official approval.

In May *AI* again submitted a lengthy statement to the United Nations attesting to a continuing pattern of gross violations of human rights in Ethiopia (see page 1). Next year, as a result of the principle of rotating membership, Ethiopia will become a member of the UN Commission on Human Rights □

Djibouti Parliamentarians tortured

Parliamentarians Mohamed Ahmed SOULE and Ali Moussa ABAKARI along with the government's former *Directeur de Cabinet*, Ibrahim ALI, were among a large number of civilians and police officers arrested around 18 June in Djibouti's capital, Djibouti, after an alleged assassination attempt against the present *Directeur de Cabinet*.

A few days earlier M. Soulé had spoken in the country's National Assembly criticizing what he called the "stifling of the freedom of expression" resulting from the creation of a new single party state. He also condemned the "systematic tortures" used by the security forces in response to acts of political violence against the state—acts which he also condemned.

The torture methods which M. Soulé described to the National Assembly included "the swing" (*le balançoire*) in which the victim is beaten while suspended from a horizontal bar (*May Newsletter*). According to M. Soulé victims were also being subjected to cigarette burns and electric shocks. Some, he said, had been suffocated and others had been forced to drink dangerous chemicals.

He alleged that these methods were being employed arbitrarily, particularly when those arrested were members of the Afar ethnic group.

M. Soulé then proposed legislation that would prohibit the use of torture, the creation of a parliamentary commission to control such abuses by the security forces and the setting up of a national security council to monitor the activities of the security forces.

Several days later M. Soulé himself was taken into custody. At the time of his arrest, despite his claim to parlia-

mentary privilege, he was severely beaten. It is also reported that he was tortured while in detention together with all others arrested at the time. All were held for 7 days in incommunicado detention.

AI is now in possession of sufficient evidence to be convinced that torture is being practised systematically in Djibouti, usually after large-scale arrests following outbreaks of political violence in the country. The evidence received by *AI* includes eyewitness testimonies, the reports of medical investigations and the autopsy report on Omar Mohamed Omar, a prisoner who died under torture in detention on 27 March.

It is also evident that many of the arrests which take place are indiscriminate, as is indicated by the recent court acquittal of all those accused of bombing the *Palmier en Zinc* restaurant in the capital in December 1977. During the trial all defendants presented medical evidence to support their claims that they had been tortured.

On 22 June *AI* cabled President Hassan GOULED urging him to guarantee maximum safeguards against the ill-treatment of all those arrested in the latest incident. The organization has received no reply to its cable.

One week after the arrests some prisoners were released and obtained medical treatment. Others, including M. Soulé and M. Abakari were transferred to Gabote prison which is under civil jurisdiction and where conditions are reported to be more satisfactory than those in the security force's detention center.

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