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# PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE WEEK The Forgotten Women

A Buddhist nun in Viet Nam, a Guatemalan feminist and a university law lecturer in Malawi—these three women have one thing in common. Each is a political prisoner.

The Vietnamese nun, **Thich nu Tri Hai**, has been held incommunicado in police custody since her arrest in May this year.

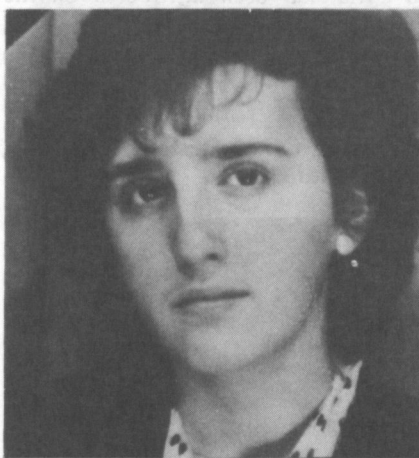
**Alaide Foppa** of Guatemala has been missing since 1980 when she was abducted from her home, apparently by plain-clothes security agents.

**Vera Chirwa**, 44, and her husband, **Orton Chirwa**, are serving life sentences in Malawi after their conviction in May 1983 on charges of treason—they were not allowed legal representation at their trial. They were originally sentenced to death and spent more than a year facing execution, before being granted clemency in June this year.

Each is among a series of cases highlighted in this issue of the *Newsletter* to coincide with Prisoners of Conscience Week, which is being observed from 15 to 20 October. The theme this year: Women in Prison.

The plight of the Forgotten Women needs international attention. Prisoners of Conscience Week has previously highlighted the plight of other categories of prisoner: trade unionists, children, long-term detainees, human rights activists. This year *AI* points out that many of the world's political prisoners are women, their cases spanning a wide range of occupations, countries, ideologies and cultures.

Women have suffered from the full variety of injustices to which governments in recent years have subjected their



**Ana Vujic, 23, a Yugoslav resident in Paris, was arrested while on holiday in Yugoslavia in 1983 and is now in jail there after being sentenced for making "hostile propaganda" (see page 2).**

citizens: political imprisonment, detention without trial, "disappearances" and extrajudicial execution.

A Chilean trade union leader, **Reinalda Pereira Plaza**, who was taken into custody eight years ago, has been "missing" ever since. She was five months pregnant at the time. A leading member of a South African women's organization, **Florence Mkhize** has been repeatedly detained without trial or restricted under banning orders over a period of more than 20 years.

The reasons for the victimization of women cover a broad spectrum. Some are detained for their faith. Others have become involved in opposition political movements. Some have played a role in their countries' trade unions or have tried to help organize the urban or rural poor.

Some women have become victims because they themselves were active in exposing human rights abuses in their countries. In many countries, ranging from Argentina and El Salvador to South Africa, The Philippines and China, women have been deeply involved in the human rights effort—and have faced the consequences.

**Tatyana Osipova**, a 35-year-old computer operator, is now serving a sentence of 10 years' imprisonment and internal exile in the Soviet Union, accused of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". A human rights activist, she was a mem-

ber of the unofficial Moscow Helsinki monitoring group, set up to monitor compliance with the human rights provisions of the Final Act of the 1975 Helsinki Conference. Most of its members have since been imprisoned.

Since Tatyana was sent to a labour camp in 1981, she has been on hunger-strike at least twice, demanding to meet her husband, who is also a prisoner of conscience and is held in another camp some 1,000 kilometres away. During a hunger-strike that lasted from December 1982 to March 1983, she lost 25 kilograms, and was reportedly handcuffed while being forcibly fed. It is not yet known whether the authorities have permitted her to see her husband.

Activism on behalf of women's rights may have been one of the reasons behind the "disappearance" of Guatemalan feminist **Alaide Foppa**, who has now been missing for four years. She was abducted when she returned from exile in Mexico to visit her sick mother. Armed men forced her into their car and drove away. Like thousands of other Guatemalans abducted in the same manner, she has never been seen again.

While living in exile, she had become an active member of *AI*, campaigning for the release of prisoners of conscience, fair trials for political prisoners and an end to torture and executions.

One woman who has direct experience of *AI*'s efforts is **Farkhanda Bukhari**, a women's organizer for the banned



**Farkhanda Bukhari** Pakistan People's Party now living abroad. Imprisoned three times after the latest imposition of martial law in Pakistan, she was held in solitary confinement in the

old Lahore Fort and tortured. She was deprived of sleep, beaten and burned with lighted cigarettes. When she was sent into exile, *AI* contacted her. The organization arranged a medical examination and hospital treatment and then worked to get her accepted as a political refugee.

"I and my family cannot forget the help that was given to me", she says. "The local members of Amnesty Inter-

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## About this issue . . .

This issue of the *Amnesty International Newsletter* focuses on women in prison—the theme of this year's Prisoners of Conscience Week, which is being observed from 15 to 20 October. Appeal cases are included on pages 2 and 3. Other news items are on page 4.

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national came to my home from time to time and we share many common human feelings, hope for the future and anger at the insult that people, especially those in Third World countries, have to face for their so-called insignificance."

"But," she adds, "above this, all the love that these sympathetic people have given me and my family will remain a precious asset to our lives forever."

Her words echo those of another woman thousands of miles away—the former Soviet prisoner of conscience **Yulia Voznesenskaya**. After her release, in 1982 the Leningrad poet wrote to one of the *AI* groups that had worked for over five years for her freedom:

"Any letter or postcard addressed to political prisoners, their families or to officials . . . plays an important role in the lives of the prisoners. It improves their position even if the letters never reach their hands.

"Sometimes in the camp, the camp authorities and wardens would start to be especially polite to me and they would avoid ill-treating other women prisoners in my presence. I guessed something had put them on their guard. Later on, quite by accident, I found out that a letter from abroad had come for me and caused this change in their behaviour."

As *AI* starts its campaign for the release of other women still held as prisoners of conscience, hoping to engage women's organizations in the drive and to generate a worldwide deluge of letters and postcards to offending governments, the message from the front line of the struggle for human rights is unmistakable.

"Even if you get discouraged by seeing no results from all your efforts," argues Yulia Voznesenskaya, "what you write makes a difference. We cannot live and struggle without help from other countries."

## APPEAL CASES

**Please send courteous letters appealing for the immediate release of the prisoners whose cases follow. In the cases of Alaide Foppa (Guatemala) and Reinalda del Carmen Pereira (Chile), appeal for their detentions by the authorities or the latter's agents to be acknowledged, for full investigations into their "disappearances" and for public statements on their present whereabouts.**

### FATIMA AL-LAZKANI, Syria

Fatima al-Lazkani, 27, a former medical student at the University of Damascus, is being held without charge or trial in Kafr Sousseh prison, Damascus. She was arrested in September 1981 while distributing leaflets for the banned Party of

# APPEAL CASES

Communist Action, of which she was a member. The party has faced periodic suppression and many of its members have been arrested, including Fatima al-Lazkani's husband.

She is also a poet and novelist and was active in the promotion of women's rights. In 1977 she was arrested and briefly detained after leaflets on women's rights in Syria had been distributed on the campus of Damascus University.

### ALAIDE FOPPA DE SOLORZANO, Guatemala



Alaide Foppa de Solórzano was a lecturer in literature at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and a well-known art critic and poet. She was abducted on 19 December 1980 while visiting her native Guatemala to see her sick mother. Armed men believed to be members of the security forces bundled her into a car and drove away.

No thorough investigation has ever been instigated into her "disappearance" and *AI* continues to press for those responsible to be held accountable.

She was one of Guatemala's most distinguished intellectuals, and had been living in exile in Mexico City since 1954.

She was an active feminist, being one of the founders of the feminist magazine *Fem* and the presenter of the radio program *Foro de la Mujer*, Women's Forum. Her abduction may have been prompted by an interview she had recorded with Indian women from the Quiché Province of Guatemala, where opposition to the then government of General Lucas García was strong. It has also been suggested that it may have been intended as a reprisal for the active opposition of her husband and her son, Mario, to the government of the day.

### VERA CHIRWA, Malawi

Vera Chirwa, a 44-year-old university law lecturer, is currently serving a sentence of life-imprisonment at Zomba Prison in Malawi together with her husband, Orton Chirwa, a former Minister of Justice and Attorney-General.

Vera Chirwa and her husband spent more than a year under the death sentence before they were granted clemency in late June 1984 by Dr Hastings Kamuzu Banda, Malawi's Life-President. They had been sentenced to death for treason in May 1983 by the Southern Regional



Vera Chirwa

Traditional Court after a trial in which they were denied legal representation.

She left Malawi soon after the country became independent in 1964. Orton Chirwa was then a cabinet minister but a dispute within the government led him to go into exile in Tanzania. On 24 December 1981 Vera Chirwa and her husband were detained by Malawian security forces. The Malawi Government alleged that they had entered the country clandestinely from Zambia but the couple have stated throughout that they were abducted by force from Zambia. Their son, Fumbani Chirwa, was with them. He was detained without trial for more than two years but was released uncharged in February 1984.

### ANA VUJIC, Yugoslavia

Ana Vujic, aged 23, was arrested while on holiday in Yugoslavia in August 1983. She is serving a sentence of one and a half years' imprisonment in Slavenska Pozega prison, Croatia, for making "hostile propaganda".

She was born in Knin, Croatia, but her parents moved to Paris in 1969, where she has lived ever since. She worked for a travel bureau in Paris and was reportedly active in the Croat Catholic Mission, which ministers to the spiritual and welfare needs of the Croat community there.

On 22 August 1983 she was summoned for interrogation by the police on the island of Pag and informed that she was under investigation on charges of having engaged in hostile propaganda.

Her trial took place in Rijeka on 23 December 1983. She was reportedly accused of having visited Pag twice, once in 1982 as a tourist courier and again in 1983 on holiday when "she attempted . . . to begin discussions with the aim of destroying fraternity and unity and belittling the worth of Yugoslavia's achievements and the role of the working class". There was no indication that she used or incited violence.

She was found guilty under Article 133 of the Criminal Code and sentenced to one and a half years' imprisonment.

An appearance she made on French

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television when Pope John Paul II visited France may have antagonized the Yugoslav authorities. Taking part in the program as a representative of the Croat Catholic Mission, she reportedly replied that she was a "Croat" when asked whether she was "Croat" or "Yugoslav".

### THICH NU TRI HAI, Viet Nam

Thich nu Tri Hai, a Buddhist nun aged 46, was arrested together with 11 other Buddhist monks and nuns when police raided Gia Lam and Van Hanh pagodas on 1-2 April 1984.

She is one of Viet Nam's foremost Buddhist scholars. She was chief librarian at Saigon's Van Hanh Buddhist University before its dissolution in 1975, and was an active member of the peace movement during the Viet Nam war.

She was a former member of the An Quang Buddhist sect, which continued to campaign peacefully against human rights violations after the change of government in 1975 before being dissolved in November 1981.

The whereabouts of Thich nu Tri Hai and the other monks and nuns arrested at the same time are unknown. In *AI*'s experience, people arrested in Viet Nam for political reasons can be held incommunicado without charge or trial for two years or more.

### REINALDA DEL CARMEN PEREIRA PLAZA, Chile

Reinalda del Carmen Pereira Plaza, a medical laboratory technologist and a trade union leader, was violently abducted on 15 December 1976 by two armed men who forced her into a car. She was five months pregnant at the time.

She was one of 13 members of the Chilean Communist Party who "disappeared" after being arrested in December 1976. Investigations into the cases of eight of the 13 people were closed within a week, after the government alleged that they had left the country for Argentina.

An appeal was submitted and lawyers and relatives succeeded in gathering evidence which revealed that the documents used to show that the victims had left the country had been tampered with.

The investigations have been closed and reopened at least three times since the judge, Sr. Aldo Guastavino, was appointed in 1977. In early 1983, Judge Carlos Cerda was appointed to continue the work. In September 1983 a police border official at the time Reinalda was supposed to have left the country—21 December 1976—was arrested and charged with falsifying the record sheet used to show that she had travelled to Argentina. Another border official was subsequently charged with a similar offence relating to the case of another of the 13. Both officials have since been released on bail.

Although it is the first time that police arrested in connection with a "dis-

appearance" case have been charged and not immediately amnestied, no other progress has been made in establishing the whereabouts of Reinalda del Carmen Pereira Plaza.

### FLORENCE MKHIZE, South Africa



Florence Mkhize has been repeatedly detained without trial or restricted under banning orders over a period of more than 20 years.

In 1962 she was restricted for the first time under a five-year banning order.

She was a leading member of the Federation of South African Women (FEDSAW) and an organizer of the African National Congress (ANC) in Natal from 1955 until it was banned in 1960.

In 1967 she was detained without trial for several months after having organized a commemorative meeting for Chief Albert Luthuli, former President-General of the ANC and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize. She was again restricted under a five-year banning order which expired in 1973 and a third five-year banning order was imposed in November 1981 after FEDSAW campaigned against the government's education policies and official celebrations in 1981 commemorating the 20th anniversary of the adoption of a republican constitution in South Africa. She was restricted to the magisterial district of Durban and Lamontville township where she lives, required to report to the police weekly, and subjected to partial house arrest.

In July 1983 she was restricted under a new banning order which is due to expire on 30 June 1985.

### SYLVIA GOETHE, GDR

Sylvia Goethe, aged 29, was arrested in January 1984 and tried on 17 April by the regional court in Erfurt for "taking up illegal contacts" under Article 219 of the penal code, which proscribes the distribution of material abroad which is "liable to damage the interests of the German Democratic Republic [GDR]". She was sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment.

She had been involved in peace activities in Jena and Apolda, had submitted

an application for permission to emigrate and had visited the permanent mission of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in Berlin (GDR) in this connection.

All the available information indicates that she has been imprisoned for exercising her right to freedom of expression, as set out in Articles 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (to which the GDR is a party). *AI* considers that Article 219 of the GDR penal code is incompatible with the freedom "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds regardless of frontier" (Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights).

## APPEALS ADDRESSES

The addresses for appeals on behalf of the prisoners of conscience included in this issue are: (the prisoner and country are named first, then the appeal address)

#### Fatima al-Lazkani, SYRIA:

His Excellency Hafez al-Assad / Presidential Palace / Damascus / Syrian Arab Republic.

#### Alaide Foppa, GUATEMALA:

General Oscar Humberto Mejía Víctores / Jefe de Estado y Ministro de Defensa / Palacio Nacional / Guatemala / Guatemala.

#### Vera Chirwa, MALAWI:

His Excellency Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda / Life-President of the Republic of Malawi / Office of the President and Cabinet / Lilongwe / Malawi.

#### Ana Vujić, YUGOSLAVIA:

Borislav Krajina / Sekretar / Savezni Sekretarijat za Pravosudje / Bul. Lenjina 2/Beograd/Yugoslavia.

#### Thich nu Tri Hai, VIET NAM:

Pham Van Dong / Chu tịch Hội đồng Bộ Trưởng / Hanoi / Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

#### Reinalda Pereira Plaza, CHILE:

Sr. Sergio Onofre Jarpa / Ministro del Interior/Ministerio del Interior/ Palacio de La Moneda / Santiago / Chile.

#### Florence Mkhize, SOUTH AFRICA:

Hon. Louis Le Grange / Minister of Law and Order / Union Buildings / Pretoria / South Africa.

#### Sylvia Goethe, GDR

Erich Honecker / Chairman of the State Council / 102 Berlin / Marx Engels Platz / German Democratic Republic.

# CHINA: Call for reforms to protect human rights

**AI has urged wide-ranging reforms to protect human rights in the People's Republic of China and has called on the Chinese Government to free all citizens imprisoned for their beliefs, to guarantee fair trials for all political prisoners, and to abolish the death penalty.**

Evidence of mass executions, of political prisoners held for years without trial or convicted after summary proceedings, of ill-treatment of prisoners is cited in a major AI report\* published on 26 September.

The 132-page report includes detailed case studies of prisoners of conscience and a memorandum submitted to the government. AI offered to publish comments from the Chinese authorities, but none have so far been received.

The report says non-violent dissent has been suppressed in China by convicting political activists of "counter-revolutionary offences" which carry sentences of 10 to 15 years in prison.

Prisoners include workers and students active in the "democracy movement" that emerged in China in 1978, Roman Catholic priests loyal to the Vatican and Tibetans accused of supporting nationalist groups.

Some political trials have been held behind closed doors, with only selected audiences allowed to attend. In some cases, prisoners' families were not even told trials were taking place.

In other cases, political prisoners have been held for years without charge or trial, assigned to labour camps for "re-education through labour". Some prison-



**A man convicted of murder kneels before being executed. The soldier standing behind him holds a gun to the nape of his neck. The placard around the prisoner's neck states that he is a murderer: his name has already been crossed out. Taishan, Guangdong province, 23 September 1983.**

ers are reported to have been held in solitary confinement, manacled day and night for days or weeks, beaten or made to stand without moving for 24 hours without food.

**Wei Jingsheng**, editor of an unofficial magazine which has now been banned, is reported to have been held in solitary confinement since his trial in 1979, allowed out for exercise only once a month. Reports reaching AI said he became mentally disturbed as a result and was twice moved to hospital in Beijing (Peking) for treatment.

AI does not have enough information for it to estimate the number of political prisoners now held in Chinese prisons and labour camps. However, former inmates say there are political prisoners in most of the country's penal institutions.

## Mass executions

Expressing concern about mass executions that began with the launching of a nation-wide anti-crime campaign in August 1983, the report points out that 44 crimes are now punishable by death in the People's Republic of China. These include "counter-revolutionary offences", theft, embezzlement, molesting women and pimping.

Summary proceedings have been used during the campaign in trials resulting in the death penalty.

Defendants can be brought to trial without being given a copy of the indictment first. Appeal procedures have been cut short; the report cites cases in which the accused were executed within six days of the alleged offence.

The report notes that "there is no recognition—either in law or in practice—of the right to be presumed innocent before being proved guilty in a court of law".

Public executions were supposed to have stopped under the Law of Criminal Procedure which came into force in January 1980. But the report cites evidence that some executions are still carried out in public and the prisoners' bodies left on display.

Executions are carried out by the traditional method of shooting the victims in the back of the head while he or she kneels.

\* *China: Violations of Human Rights*—available in English and French from local AI sections or from AI's International Secretariat, price £3. A briefing on the report in English, Spanish and Chinese is also available, price £0.60□

## AI mission visits camps in Mexico

An AI delegation visited a number of Guatemalan refugee camps in Chiapas, southern Mexico, from 3 to 16 May.

The delegation was able to go where it wished and collected first-hand testimony from Guatemalan refugees about human rights violations in Guatemala.

It also received information about an incident, which occurred just before its visit to Mexico, in which seven refugees at the El Chupadero refugee camp, near the Guatemalan border, were killed by troops believed to belong to the Guatemalan army.

The delegation met senior officials of the Mexican Government and its agencies, representatives of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and a large number of foreign and local groups working with refugees in southern Mexico.

AI has continued to correspond with the Mexican authorities about the findings of its May mission and later reports received by the organization about allegations of arrests, harassment and ill-treatment of Guatemalan refugees and medical and religious personnel working with them in the camps and in the capital, Mexico City□

## Egypt—Jihad trial

In August AI sent a trial observation mission to Egypt led by Amand d'Hondt, a lawyer and Chairperson of AI's Belgian (francophone) Section. The delegates attended hearings before the (Emergency) Supreme State Security Court in Cairo of the trial of 176 defendants accused of illegal activities connected with the banned *Jihad* organization. The trial began in February 1984 and is continuing□

## Releases in Morocco

At least 32 Moroccans adopted by AI as prisoners of conscience are known to have been released on 23 and 24 August. They are among 350 prisoners who were to be released or have their sentences reduced under clemency measures announced by King Hassan II on 20 August.

A further 219 prisoners have been granted remissions under a second clemency measure to mark the Muslim feast of Id al-Adha on 6 September□

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# FILE ON TORTURE

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## Women and Torture

"At one point, I realized that my daughter was in front of me. I even managed to touch her: I felt her hands. 'Mummy, say something, anything to make this stop,' she was saying. I tried to embrace her but they prevented me. They separated us violently. They took her to an adjacent room and there, there I listened in horror as they began to torture her with electricity—my own daughter! When I heard her moans, her terrible screams, I couldn't take any more. I thought I would go mad, that my head and my entire body were going to explode."

—Testimony of a Chilean torture victim

Torture is being inflicted on men and women alike in every region of the world in attempts by governments to suppress dissent. Victims are being tortured to extract information or "confessions" or simply to punish or intimidate them. The victims themselves come from almost all walks of life and include men, women and children.

In Afghanistan, Farida Ahmadi, a 22-year-old medical student, was continually interrogated, denied sleep for up to a week and subjected to electric shock torture when she was detained by the state information police for six months in 1981. She also alleged that she witnessed the torture of other political prisoners. Those tortured have included women as young as 16.

In Rwanda, Immaculée Mukamugema was confined in a completely unlit cell (*cachot noir*) in Ruhengeri prison. She was never let out for exercise, and became seriously ill. Her conditions improved only after she received a personal visit from the Minister of Health and was transferred to another prison. (see photograph on page 2)

Former women political prisoners in Pakistan are often very reluctant to make known publicly, or even to close relatives, the details of their treatment in detention. The rigorous interrogations, complete lack of privacy and constant supervision often by male guards is felt as a severe humiliation for women of Muslim faith (see also page 2).

Women victims are often sub-



Hilda Narcisco, a Roman Catholic lay community worker in the Philippines, says she was raped and sexually abused in other ways after being arrested without warrant on 24 March 1983. (see Appeal Cases)

jected to sexual abuse and insults. Rape is common. In El Salvador it is believed that many of the women who have been raped in prison will not admit it—either because they want to block out the memory or because they feel ashamed. In other countries, women who were pregnant at the time of their arrest have been beaten with rifle butts until they aborted. In some cases women raped by their interrogators have been refused abortions.

The close relationship between women and their families is often exploited. In Iran former male detainees have consistently reported that, in addition to being physically tortured, they have received threats that, unless they

confessed, their wives, mothers or sisters would be raped, tortured or even executed. One former detainee told Amnesty International how, while in prison, he was ordered to speak to his sister at home by telephone. She told him that Revolutionary Guards had come to her house and would arrest her unless he confessed and gave his interrogator the names of his political associates.

Amnesty International has also received reports from Iran of mothers being tortured in front of their children.

In Turkey women have been tortured in front of their husbands, and their husbands in front of them:

"The next day I thought I heard my husband screaming . . . (and then) I was again taken blindfold to the torture room . . . they took off the blindfold, and, sure enough, it was my husband.

"He was lying naked beside a black tiled wall. His hands were tied behind his back and they were administering electricity to his genitals.

"After showing him to me, they retied the blindfold and, in a voice my husband could hear, threatened to strip and rape me.

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"They wanted us to reveal our address. . . . They said I could save my husband if I gave them the address.

"On another occasion I was again suspended from the ceiling and electricity was being administered to my toes. I was semi-conscious when I heard them bring my husband in. They told him that he could save me if he talked."

—testimony of Sema Ogur,  
former prisoner in Turkey

There are many immediate and long-term effects of such intense physical and psychological abuse. In 1982 Amnesty International delegates medically examined Adriana Vargas Vásquez, a 31-year-old factory worker who was tortured in Chile in March 1980.

She said that she had completely lost all sense of time after one day's torture. After being tortured with electric shocks she had especially painful breasts, wrists and ankles. She had swelling and discolouration in places where she had received blows, and there were small black scabs where electrodes had been applied. She lost about 6kg while in detention for four days. She had almost no appetite initially after her release and suffered for about 20 days from nausea. She developed a urinary tract infection. Her genitals became inflamed two months, and again four months, after her release. Among other symptoms, she had abdominal pain and headaches when she menstruated (which she had not experienced before), persistent headaches in the back of the head and around the temples, impaired memory, difficulty in concentrating, dizziness, insomnia, nightmares, depression to the point of feeling suicidal, proneness to weeping, and anxiety attacks triggered especially by loud noises.

Women are sometimes detained and tortured not because of their own activities but because of the alleged activities of their relatives and friends who are sought by the police or for whose surrender the women are held as hostages. In Syria, tortured prisoners have been shown to their families so that the latter would persuade them to confess to avoid further torture.



Prisoner of conscience Immaculée Mukamugema, Rwanda, was confined in a completely unlit cell in Ruhengeri prison for several months in the second half of 1982. She has been held since April 1980 and is now in Kigali central prison, serving a 10-year prison sentence imposed in late 1981 after her conviction on charges of distributing subversive documents. Amnesty International believes she is imprisoned for non-violently exercising her right to freedom of expression.

Testimonies received by Amnesty International from women prisoners held in Punta de Rieles prison in Uruguay confirm that the majority of them live in a constant state of insecurity. They believe that intelligence information on the personal lives of prisoners and particularly on family relationships may be used as a means of pressure or emotional blackmail, or to reinforce the prisoner's sense of dependency and consequent loss of self-esteem. This is particularly evident when prisoners are held for long periods in solitary confinement and deprived of contact with their families and fellow prisoners.

## Women detained in Pakistan

Hundreds of women have been detained in Pakistan at different times since the imposition of martial law in July 1977 and the banning of political parties and peaceful political activities. Some were arrested as hostages

to pressurize their husbands or other relatives being sought by the authorities and were held for relatively short periods. Other women political prisoners have been detained for several months or longer, generally without trial, often undergoing periods of rigorous interrogation.

Amnesty International has received reports of the torture and ill-treatment of women political prisoners in Lahore Fort, which is used as an interrogation centre mainly by military intelligence personnel.

Amnesty International believes that during the period 1982/83 at least a dozen female political prisoners were held there for periods of several weeks to one year. Some of them were held in solitary confinement, and many were denied access to their families or defence counsel. There are reported to be no beds, and prisoners sleep on the floor. The cells are dirty, generally lack any proper toilet facilities and are open on one side, thus affording no privacy.

Two women held there during the second half of 1983 and now released have described their experiences. The following is based on their accounts.

X, a political activist from Lahore, was picked up by police from her home in 1983 during a campaign of "civil disobedience" initiated by the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy (MRD), a banned coalition of opposition political parties.

She was first taken to the Superintendent of Police in Lahore who interrogated her himself during the first night. The following afternoon she was sent to Lahore Fort.

Her interrogation began at once and continued almost daily for a month. It was very cold in the Fort but she was not allowed more clothes—she had only the light garments she was wearing at the time of her arrest.

She was not allowed to see her ailing father, in spite of the representations of doctors at the hospital where he was that this might improve his condition. He died during her detention. She was allowed to attend his funeral, then had to return to the Fort, where her interrogation recommenced.

After two and a half months she was sent to Kot Lakhpat Jail, from where she was released after a further two months' detention.

X stated that the constant verbal abuse and humiliation to which she was subjected throughout her detention in Lahore Fort had been more difficult to bear than physical abuse.

Y, also from Lahore, was arrested on 7 August 1983 and taken directly to Lahore Fort. She was kept for two

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## APPEAL CASES

**The Philippines: Hilda Narcisco**  
*Hilda Narcisco, a Roman Catholic lay community worker, says she was raped and sexually abused in other ways after being arrested without warrant on 24 March 1983.*

Some 30 military personnel raided the house of a German Lutheran pastor in Davao City, Mindanao. She was then forced into a car, blindfolded and apparently taken to a "safehouse"—a secret interrogation centre.

She was sexually molested during the journey and again the next day, when at one point her interrogation was interrupted and she was taken to another room and raped.

On 26 March she was moved to Camp Catitipan, Davao City. In August, a judge ordered charges of subversion against her to be dropped on grounds of lack of evidence but it was not until 6 September that she was released.

While still in detention, she took steps to initiate a case against the military personnel who had sexually abused and raped her. After her release she courageously tried to pursue the case with the help of local women's associations, in the belief that it would help to put an end to the reportedly widespread sexual abuse of women political detainees.

Forced to move home every month because of fear of her unknown assailants, she found it impossible to establish their identities because of non-cooperation by the military authorities. In December 1983 the Minister of National Defense informed her lawyers that there was insufficient evidence to bring the case to court.

Although she is no longer willing to pursue the case actively herself, she wishes it to remain open and hopes that international and domestic pressure will result in her assailants being prosecuted.

*Please send courteous letters:*

- *urging that the alleged ill-treatment of Hilda Narcisco be impartially investigated and that anyone found to have been responsible be brought to justice;*
- *urging the authorities to issue clear instructions to the Philippine security forces that torture and ill-treatment will not be tolerated under any circumstances.*

Send your letters to: President Ferdinand E. Marcos / Malacanang Palace / Metro Manila / Philippines; and to: Mr Juan Ponce Enrile / Minister of National Defense / Ministry of National Defense / Camp Emilio Aguinaldo / Quezon City / Metro Manila / Philippines.

**USSR: Anna Chertkova**

*Anna Chertkova, aged 57, has been held in Tashkent Special Psychiatric Hospital since 1973 because of her religious beliefs. She has repeatedly been given injections of Sulfazin, used in the USSR as an antipsychotic drug.*

She is a member of a breakaway wing of the Baptist Church which is not officially recognized by the authorities. She was denied living accommodation in Alma-Ata and persecuted for several years because of her religious convictions before being sent to the special psychiatric hospital in 1973. Such hospitals are officially designated only for people who "represent a special danger to society". There is no evidence to suggest that she has ever posed such a threat.



Over many years Amnesty International has continued to receive reports of prisoners of conscience being ill-treated in psychiatric hospitals with excessive quantities of painful and disorienting drugs administered without medical justification.

Although the Procuracy is legally charged with supervising such hospitals, in practice inmates are unable to submit complaints about ill-treatment. They may write letters only at the discretion of doctors. All letters are censored and many inmates have been punished for

describing their conditions in diaries or smuggled messages. They are vulnerable to arbitrary ill-treatment and are powerless to protest, being confined in conditions of secrecy in institutions which are often too remote for regular visits by relatives to be possible.

*Please send courteous letters:*

- *urging the immediate and unconditional release of Anna Chertkova as a prisoner of conscience;*
- *expressing concern about the forcible confinement of prisoners of conscience in psychiatric hospitals and urging the immediate and unconditional release of all such prisoners.*

Send your letters to: The Director of Tashkent Special Psychiatric Hospital/Ms I.L. Andryakova/SSSR/Uzbekskaya / SSR / 700058 g. Tashkent / uchr. UYA-64 / IZ-1 / Spetsialnaya psikhiatricheskaya bolnitsa / Nachalniku Andryakovoy I.L.; and to: The Procurator of the Uzbek republic/Mr Aleksei Buturlin/SSSR/Uzbekskaya SSR/g. Tashkent/Respublikanskaya prokuratura / Prokuroru / Burikhodzhayevu.

**Brazil: Raquel Cândido e Silva**

*Raquel Cândido e Silva, an elected town council official, was arrested and tortured after attempts by agents of the Polícia Militar (Military Police) to remove some 2,000 peasants from land under dispute in Eldorado, Porto Velho, on 18 March 1984.*

She was taken to the Central Police Station in Porto Velho, where she was allegedly assaulted by a doctor and four police agents. She was later charged, refused bail and taken to the Third Police Station. On 19 May she was threatened with rape, beaten and had her feet burned with lighted cigarettes, before being moved to the main barracks of the *Polícia Militar* suffering from fever and blood in her urine.

On 20 May she appeared before the judge of the II Vara Criminal Court, was examined by a doctor and transferred to the Hospital de Base in Porto Velho, where tests showed that she had a displaced kidney as a result of severe blows to the side of her body.

At the beginning of June she received further treatment at the Hospital de Servidor Público Municipal, São Paulo.

On 14 June she publicly denounced her ill-treatment to the *Camara Municipal* (Municipal Council Chamber) in Rio de Janeiro.

Torture is widespread in Brazil and

*Continued on page 4*

Continued from page 3

is often used in police stations in the large metropolitan areas of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro to extract signed confessions from suspects.

In the countryside the targets are often Indians and peasants who have resisted attempts by landowners and hired gunmen to force them off the land.

Despite persistent and well-documented allegations of torture, Amnesty International knows of only a few cases in which police officials have been convicted of the torture and ill-treatment of detainees.

*Please send courteous letters:*

● *urging that the alleged torture of Raquel Cândido e Silva be impartially investigated and that anyone found to be responsible be brought to justice;*

● *urging the authorities to issue clear instructions to all members of the security forces that torture will not be tolerated under any circumstances.*

*Send your letters to:* Presidente da República Federativa do Brasil / Presidente / General Joao Baptista Figueiredo/Gabinete do Presidente/Palacio do Planalto / 70.000 Brasilia D.F. / Brasil; *and to:* Sr. Ibrahim Abi-Ackel/Ministro da Justiça/Ministério da Justiça/Esplanada dos Ministérios/Bloco B/70.000 Brasilia D.F./ Brasil.

**Pakistan:** *Continued from page 2*

months in a cell with another woman.

Her interrogation began after the first month. She told the interrogators she was not active in politics, but was nevertheless shown a list of names and asked about those persons' activities.

For the first 15 days she was interrogated by male police officers from the Crimes Branch. After that, female personnel took over.

She was not allowed to sleep for 48 hours. She was threatened with being stripped and with having her relatives similarly treated in front of her. She was also hit. Y suffers from high blood pressure and fainted on several occasions.

The interrogation lasted for approximately three months, after which she was transferred to Kot Lakhpat Jail. Three months later she was released.

Both women still have to appear before a military court once a fortnight—although no formal charges have been brought against them.

The family lives of both have suffered as a result of their imprisonment. X is now separated from her husband, while other family members—her disabled son and late father—were also arrested at different times and held as hostages. Y's daughter was due to be married at

## WHAT YOU CAN DO . . .

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

2. Please write a further letter to the addresses provided expressing general concern about reports of ill-treatment and torture in each of these countries.

● *Point out that the United Nations has banned torture in all cases.*

● *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.*

● *Urge that procedures for detention and interrogation be kept under regular review and that there be regular independent visits of inspection in places of detention.*

● *Urge that all complaints and reports of torture be impartially and effectively investigated, and that the results of such investigations be made public.*

3. Give this File to women's organizations, trade unions, religious organizations and nurses' associations in your country and urge them to publicize the File and take appropriate action.

4. Send a copy of this File to women's journals, suggesting that the editor publish a summary of it for readers.

the time of her mother's arrest but the marriage was broken off once the family of the intended husband learned of Y's arrest for political reasons.

## 'You have been present all these years . . .'



Lilian Celiberti was sent to prison in 1981 by a military court in Uruguay. She had been abducted from her home in exile in Brazil and, after being brought across the border illegally by security agents, was falsely charged with trying to enter Uruguay surreptitiously with "subversive" literature.

In August 1980 Amnesty Interna-

tional interviewed a deserter from the Uruguayan army, Hugo Walter García Rivas, who testified to his participation in the kidnapping and subsequent torture of Lilian Celiberti.

Her two small children, Camilo, 8, and Francesca, 3, were abducted with her. She signed a false confession in order to secure their release and was subsequently imprisoned in a military barracks and tortured.

Amnesty International adopted her as a prisoner of conscience. Her case was allocated to an Amnesty International group in Italy which worked ceaselessly on her behalf until she was released on 17 November 1983 after completing her sentence. The Amnesty International group believes that its work contributed to a reduction in her sentence—at her trial the judges sentenced her to five years' imprisonment instead of the 10 years asked for by the Public Prosecutor.

A month later she wrote to the Amnesty International group in Italy:

**"You have been present all these years with a constancy and dedication which has accompanied me in the worst moments, giving me strength and joy.**

**"I remember clearly the emotion I felt on returning to my cell after one of the fortnightly visits, the only time I talked to anyone, having learned about your letters. The solidarity that is expressed over oceans of distance gives strength and faith in one's solitude, and helps one confront the repressive apparatus by keeping one's human integrity and its essential values intact . . ."**