

## **Worldwide Appeals - April 2001**

### **Israel**

Possible prisoner of conscience held in isolation

Ghassan Muhammad 'Attamleh is being held in administrative detention without charge or prospect of trial. His detention is believed to be related to his political activity during the latest Intifada uprising. He was arrested at his home in Reineh by around 20 Israeli soldiers on 21 November 2000. He was interrogated by the General Security Service for 10 days before he was served with a six-month administrative detention order. The order, renewable at the end of six months, was approved on 14 January. An appeal against this decision is pending.

Although initially held in incommunicado detention, Ghassan Muhammad 'Attamleh has since been allowed to meet with his lawyer and see his family once a fortnight. However, he is being held in isolation and forced to remain in his cell for 23 hours a day.

Ghassan Muhammad 'Attamleh is one of only two Israeli-Arabs to be held in administrative detention. He is a member of the Central Committee of the National Democratic Assembly, an Israeli-Arab organization, and was previously held in administrative detention during the 1988 and 1994 crises in the region, again for his political activism.

+Please write, calling either for Ghassan Muhammad 'Attamleh to be released immediately or charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial. Express concern that he is being held in prolonged solitary confinement constituting cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Send appeals to: Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister, 3 Kaplan Street, P O Box 187, Kiryat Ben-Gurion, Jerusalem 91919, Israel. Fax: +972 2 651 2631; and to Moshe Katsav, President of the State of Israel, The Office of the President, Hanassi Street, Jerusalem 92188, Israel. Fax: +972 2 561 1033.

### **Burundi**

Torture and detention without trial of possible prisoners of conscience

Valérie Bukuru, Eliane Bukuru, Constance Singirankabo, Fitina Barumbanzi, Sabine Ndayisimbiye and Jeanette Ndayisenga have been detained without trial for up to four years in Rumonge and Bururi prisons, accused of collaborating with Hutu-dominated armed opposition groups — mainly by allegedly providing food to them. AI believes these women may be prisoners of conscience, arbitrarily detained because their Hutu ethnic identity makes them suspect.

Valérie Bukuru, Eliane Bukuru, Constance Singirankabo, Fitina Barumbanzi and Sabine Ndayisimbiye were arrested between 1997 and 1999. All these women were tortured by the authorities shortly after their arrests.

Valérie Bukuru, a farmer, was beaten and stabbed in the legs by gendarmes. Fitina Barumbanzi, a street vendor, was repeatedly beaten with electrical flex by gendarmes, police and communal officials — she was unable to walk for two months after her ordeal.

Jeanette Ndayisenga was arrested and accused of giving food to members of an armed opposition group, apparently because she was carrying food when stopped at a roadblock.

The Bururi State Prosecutor has said that there are currently no resources to pursue investigations into detainees' cases in the Bururi and Rumonge areas.

+Please write, calling on the authorities to urgently review these cases and release the women immediately and unconditionally if no substantive evidence exists to support a recognizable criminal offence. Ask for an investigation into the allegations of torture and bring anyone found responsible to justice. Send appeals, in French if possible, to: Major Pierre Buyoya, Président de la République, BP 1870 Bujumbura, Burundi. Fax: +257 22 74 90; and to the Minister for Human Rights, Eugène Nindorera, Ministre des Droits de la Personne Humaine et des Réformes institutionnelles, BP 6802 Bujumbura, Burundi. Fax: +257 21 38 47.

## **Guyana**

Death in custody and reported torture of witness

Mohammed Shafeek, aged 47, died in Brickdam police lock-up, in the capital Georgetown, in September 2000. Two policemen allegedly held him by his hands and feet, threw him against a concrete wall and refused him medical attention. When the other detainees found him lying unconscious, they tried to revive him. An autopsy report revealed skull, neck, spinal cord and wrist fractures and other injuries. Police initially refused to confirm Shafeek's detention or death to his family for two days, and denied them permission to observe his autopsy. Police subsequently claimed that he was killed by Venezuelan sailors who had since left the country.

It was reported that an alleged witness was rearrested, held in incommunicado detention, received death threats and was tortured. Police were said to have held an unloaded gun to his head and pulled the trigger.

Although the Director of Public Prosecutions was reportedly informed, no disciplinary or criminal proceedings appear to have resulted. A coroner's inquest into Mohammed Shafeek's death has been delayed several times and had not started as of February 2001.

There have been many reports of torture, ill-treatment and incommunicado detention in Brickdam lock-up over several years which mirror more general patterns of excessive force, including extrajudicial executions and torture, used by law enforcement officials in Guyana.

+Please write, expressing concern about the death of Mohammed Shafeek and the subsequent treatment of the witness. Call for a full, prompt and impartial investigation into both incidents, the results to be made public, and action to be taken against any officer found guilty. Please also call for the protection of witnesses testifying at inquiries.

Send appeals to: The Honourable Samuel Hinds, Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister, Wights Lane, Georgetown, Republic of Guyana. Fax: +592 2 67563; and to The Honourable Ronald Gajraj, Minister of Home Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs, 6 Brickdam, Starbroek, Georgetown, Republic of Guyana. Fax: +592 2 61651.

(Please note, fax numbers are particularly difficult to connect in Guyana.)

Photos:

Israel

Caption for photo: Ghassan Muhammad 'Attamleh

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