

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture

21 November 1991

SEYCHELLES

Jean François

Amnesty International is concerned at reports that Jean François, currently serving a sentence for robbery with violence at Grand Police Military Camp, a maximum security prison on the island of Mahé, has been subjected to torture and ill-treatment with the result that he is now paralysed. He is being denied access to his lawyer. Amnesty International is concerned at reports that other prisoners held at Grand Police Camp have also been ill-treated.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Jean François, who has been in custody since 1988, was transferred from Long Island Prison to Grand Police Camp about eight months ago. He is reported to have been beaten by three prison warders at Grand Police Camp with the result that he is now paralysed from the waist down and has to use a wheelchair. He was taken to Victoria Hospital and a Rehabilitation Centre for treatment but was returned to Grand Police Camp on 8 November 1991. He was reportedly badly beaten once again on his return and was brought back to hospital on 20 November 1991 for treatment for his injuries. His lawyer is suing the Seychelles Government for the ill-treatment carried out on his client but has been denied access to him. Jean François is only allowed visits from his family.

Amnesty International is also concerned at reports of other prisoners being subjected to ill-treatment at Grand Police Camp. One prisoner, Alain Vidot, is reported to have one leg paralysed as a result of beatings received from warders. This Prison Camp, which is a civilian prison run by the military, is reported to have no trained prison staff and no published rules or regulations. Prisoners are forced to undergo hard labour and are not permitted sufficient rest periods. Communication with the outside world in the form of letters or newspapers is forbidden. There have been persistent reports that in-mates are regularly beaten, particularly if they are unable to carry out their work.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that Jean François has been severely beaten in prison and seeking assurances that the necessary medical care is available to him;
- urging that the Seychelles authorities take steps to ensure that such ill-treatment does not occur again;
- seeking assurances that he will be allowed access to his lawyer;

- urging the government to carry out a prompt and impartial investigation into the reported ill-treatment of Jean François and other prisoners at Grand Police Camp;

- urging that those responsible for carrying out such ill-treatment be brought to justice.

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APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Mr France-Albert René
President of the Republic of the Seychelles
State House
PO Box 655
Victoria
Seychelles
Telegrams: President René, Seychelles
Telexes: 2217 STATE SZ
Faxes: + 248 24200

Your Excellency

Mr James Michel
Minister of Finance and Armed Forces Chief of Staff
Ministry of Finance
State House
PO Box 313
Victoria
Seychelles
Telegrams: Minister of Finance Michel, Victoria, Seychelles
Telexes: 2363 STATE SZ
Faxes: + 248 25265

Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Padiwalla
Attorney-General
Attorney-General's Chambers
PO Box 58
National House
24041
Seychelles

Ms Danielle de St Jorre
Minister of Planning and External Affairs
PO Box 656
Victoria
Seychelles

and to diplomatic representatives of Seychelles in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 January 1992.