

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

PRESS RELEASE

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Greece: Call for independent investigation into ill-treatment of demonstrators

Amnesty International has written to the Greek Minister of the Interior regarding allegations of ill-treatment by four protestors detained after the June 2003 EU Summit in Thessaloniki who are currently on hunger strike.

During the demonstration that took place on 21 June, police reportedly used excessive force against protestors. Over 100 individuals were detained between 21 and 23 June. Twenty-nine of them were arrested and charged, including three minors. Seven of them, four of whom are nationals of Spain, Syria and the UK, and three of whom are Greek citizens are still in prison.

British citizen Simon Chapman, aged 30, Spanish citizens Carlos Martín Martínez, aged 25 and Fernando Pérez Gorraiz, aged 22, and Syrian citizen, Solaiman Dakdouk, aged 34, say that during their arrest they were kicked, beaten with batons, spat at, and verbally assaulted by police officers. They also say that they were ill-treated during their initial detention period. As a result they sustained head injuries and bruising and Simon Chapman received stitches to the forehead. Fernando Pérez Gorraiz and Carlos Martín Martínez also say that during the first days of their detention, they were denied access to medical care, and that when they did see a doctor the treatment they received was inadequate for the injuries they had sustained.

Carlos Martín Martínez's parents were denied adequate access to information about their son until his mother came to Greece on 5 November.

Such ill-treatment, if substantiated, would be in clear violation of international treaties and standards ratified by Greece, as well as domestic law.

Amnesty International is also concerned about allegations received that Simon Chapman might have been charged on the basis of fabricated evidence and urges the authorities to immediately investigate the evidence supporting these allegations.

The human rights organization urged the Greek authorities to undertake a thorough, independent and impartial investigation into allegations of ill-treatment made by the demonstrators, and should the allegations be substantiated, to ensure that victims receive adequate compensation and that the perpetrators of human rights violations to be brought to justice.

The four detainees mentioned above, as well as Greek national Spyros Tsitsas have been on

hunger strike for over six weeks, demanding temporary release on bail. Amnesty International has requested that officials ensure that adequate medical care is being provided to them and that appropriate nutrition is available should any of them decide to stop the strike.

Amnesty International is concerned that Carlos Martín Martínez may have been ill-treated during his hospitalization on 4 November for health problems that resulted from the hunger strike. Reports in the Spanish daily *El Mundo* state that he was handcuffed, offered no access to a bed and actively prevented from sleeping by being subjected to repeated blows and verbal abuse by the guards that accompanied him to the hospital.

The organization also expressed concern at the possible *refoulement* of Solaiman Dakdouk back to Syria once his trial is over. Solaiman Dakdouk is an artist whose writings and cartoons have often been critical of the Syrian government. He has been residing in Greece for the last 13 years where he has been involved in syndicalist and anti-racist politics and has played a major role in the setting up of Syrian immigrants' associations, which have also at times issued public statements against the Syrian government. He is a conscientious objector who has refused to serve in the Syrian national army. Amnesty International believes that should he be forcibly returned to Syria he would be at grave risk of being subjected to torture.

Public Document

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