

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: EUR 65/002/2003 (Public)
News Service No: 014
22 January 2003

Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: police ill-treatment and torture of detainees continues

Amnesty International has documented ongoing police ill-treatment and torture in Macedonia with the publication today of a report [Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia: Police allegedly ill-treat members of ethnic minorities \(AI Index EUR 65/001/2003\)](#) detailing six cases of alleged ill-treatment by police officers.

"Ill-treatment by police officers affects all ethnic groups in Macedonia, but in many cases reported to us it appears that ill-treatment by police has an overt ethnic or racial element to them. The Macedonian Authorities must send a clear signal to its police force that torture, ill-treatment and discriminatory treatment of detainees will not be tolerated," Amnesty International said today.

The organization is calling on Macedonian authorities to seriously address the issue of police ill-treatment and impunity. Amnesty International calls for any law enforcement official found to be responsible for ill-treatment to face disciplinary action, and criminal charges where appropriate.

"Law enforcement officials convicted of torture or serious ill-treatment should be subjected to appropriate criminal sanctions, as well as immediate dismissal from the police force. Victims of torture or ill-treatment are entitled to prompt reparation," the organization stated.

Despite the frequency of allegations of police torture or ill-treatment, the number of prosecutions of police officers for such offences is so low as to be almost negligible. Amnesty International is further informed that, in the past, most if not all of the cases raised with the Macedonian authorities by the office of the Peoples Defender (Ombudsperson) have been dismissed as unfounded despite at times compelling evidence to the contrary. Amnesty International believes that this compounds the current climate of impunity.

Amnesty International welcomed the decision by the Macedonian authorities on 16 January to authorize the publication of the reports drawn up by the Council of Europe's Committee for the Prevention of Torture (CPT), after *ad hoc* visits in October 2001 and July 2002 .

The organization noted that the CPT report on its July visit stated:

"the Committee can only conclude that the physical ill-treatment of persons deprived of their liberty by the law enforcement agencies in 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' continues to be a serious problem in 2002, four years after the first periodic visit when similar conclusions were

reached.... It should be added that after the July 2002 visit, the CPT has continued to receive allegations of ill-treatment by law enforcement officials."

Public Document

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