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Investigation urged into murder of Nicaraguan Opposition Leader

On 11 January *AI* cabled President Anastasio SOMOZA DEBAYLE of Nicaragua and urged a full investigation into the murder of Dr Pedro Joaquin CHAMORRO, director of the daily newspaper *La Prensa* and principal opposition leader. Dr Chamorro was shot in Managua on 10 January by three men firing submachine guns.

AI's cable drew the Nicaraguan government's attention to the recent Stockholm Declaration on the death penalty which condemns all judicial or extra-judicial executions by governmental agencies. The cable also pointed out that the declaration condemns as executions murders for the purpose of political coercion that are condoned by governments.

Since September 1977, when the three-year state of siege was lifted, Dr Chamorro had become a leading critic of President Somoza's regime both through his newspaper, and the coalition of opposition parties *Unión de Liberación Nacional* (UDEL), as well as in his private capacity outside Nicaragua.

During a visit to the United States of America at the end of 1977 to receive the Maria Moor Cabot prize for journalism, Dr Chamorro spoke widely of human rights violations in Nicaragua.

Shortly before his death he sponsored a number of forums in which testimonies were given by relatives of *campesinos* (peasant farmers) who were detained or "disappeared" or who had been murdered by the Nicaraguan National Guard. *La Prensa* printed the testimonies in full.

Immediately after the murder, trade unions and employers' associations in Nicaragua began a strike, demanding an independent inquiry into the killing. The strikers' principal demand now is the resignation of President Somoza.

Following confirmation that the killing would be investigated exclusively by the National Guard, *AI* also cabled President Somoza on 13 January to urge that the inquest be carried out in cooperation with an independent international delegation, suggesting that world public opinion would not otherwise accept its findings. Little progress has so far been reported on the National Guard's investigation.

MORE "HELSINKI MONITORS" ARRESTED IN THE SOVIET UNION

In January two more "Helsinki monitors" were arrested in the Soviet Union. Victor RTSKHILADZE, a historian and a member of the Helsinki monitoring group in Georgia, was arrested on 25 January and no news of him has been received since then. Grigory GOLDSTEIN, a Jewish would-be emigrant and also a member of the Georgian group, was detained for eight days and informed on

his release that criminal charges of "parasitism" would be brought against him. Mr Goldstein's trial was expected to start in February.

Contrary to earlier reports it has been learned that Shagen ARUTYUNIAN and Deacon Robert NAZARIAN, both members of the Helsinki monitoring group in Armenia, were not released after their arrest on 24 December (February *Newsletter*). Mr Arutyunian was tried on 18 January and reportedly sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for "resisting the police", while nothing further has been heard about Deacon Nazarian.

• In Moscow Irina VALITOVA, the wife of imprisoned "Helsinki monitor" Yury ORLOV stated that she has been informed by officials that the charges against her husband have been increased to "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda", which carries a maximum sentence of 7 years' imprisonment plus 5 years' exile. Previously she had been told that he would be charged with the "less serious" offence "dissemination of fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system". The families of Yury Orlov, Alexander GINZBURG and Anatoly SHCHARANSKY have been told to find defence counsel for these imprisoned "Helsinki monitors", an indication that their trials may begin soon.

It has been reported that Zviad GMSAKHURDIA and Merab KOSTAVA, arrested members of the Georgian Helsinki group, have been transferred back to Tbilisi from the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow. It is not yet known whether Serbsky Institute psychiatrists have ruled them to be mentally healthy.

• Andrei TVERDOKHLEBOV, a physicist and the founding secretary of *AI*'s Moscow group, returned from Siberia to Moscow in mid-January after serving the sentence of exile imposed on him in 1976 for "anti-
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SINGAPORE PRISONERS DETAINED WITHOUT TRIAL FOR 15 YEARS

February marked the 15th anniversary of the detention without trial of three *AI*-adopted prisoners of conscience in Singapore. Said ZAHARI (Singapore's leading poet), trade unionist HO Toon Chin (also known as HO Piao), and Dr LIM Hock Siew (a medical practitioner and former official of the opposition *Barisan Sosialis* Party), have been detained without trial since their arrest in February 1963.

They were arrested in "Operation Cold Store", a massive security swoop in which more than 100 people were detained, including trade unionists, journalists, students and members of opposition parties.

A fourth prisoner, LEE Tze Tong, a former opposition member of parliament, was arrested in October 1963 and remains in detention "awaiting deportation to the country of his choice".

On 2 February *AI* published a revised edition of its *Briefing on Singapore* to coincide with the anniversary, and has also made urgent appeals on behalf of all four prisoners.

Amnesty International Briefing on Singapore (second edition): 12 pages, is published in English by Amnesty International Publications, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England. Price 40 pence (US \$1.00) plus postage.

• On 1 February the Singapore government released LEE Eu Seng from detention. Mr Lee, aged 48, formerly managing director of the Chinese language daily newspaper *Nanyang Siang Pau*, had been detained without trial since January 1973. He was adopted by *AI* as a prisoner of conscience. A government statement announcing his release said that amendments to Singapore's Newspaper and Printing Presses Act last July had ensured that Lee Eu Seng could no longer "make use of the *Nanyang Siang Pau* against the public interest" □

"Helsinki Monitors" arrested continued

Soviet slander". On 6 February he was detained by police while staying in his sister's flat, and next day he was sentenced to 10 days' imprisonment. The official Soviet news agency TASS has reported that this sentence was for "disturbing the peace and insulting militiamen". The police had come to his sister's flat because Mr Tverdokhlebov has not received official permission to stay in Moscow, although it is his home. After his arrest Mr Tverdokhlebov undertook a hunger strike in protest.

AI has written to the procurator of Moscow city, M G MALKOV, to express its concern and to request an investigation into these developments □

SOUTH AFRICA BANS AI REPORT

On 26 January the South African government banned AI's report on *Political Imprisonment in South Africa*, published on 18 January. No reasons were given for the banning, which makes possession of the report an offence. It has simply been declared an "undesirable publication".

On 27 January, AI publicly condemned the banning of its 108-page report but said that the South African government's action was not unexpected as the report contains detailed information concerning torture, political imprisonment and widespread human rights violations in South Africa. It was, however, particularly regrettable that the people of South Africa would now be deprived by their government of the opportunity to find out what is done in their name against those who seek to remove the injustices of *apartheid*.

At the same time AI said that no official response to the report had yet been received from the South African government and commented: 'Once again, when confronted with the facts, Mr Vorster's government takes refuge in censorship and seeks to suppress the truth' □

AI CHAIRMAN VISITS CUBA

AI chairman Thomas HAMMARBERG and an AI researcher visited Cuba from 28 November to 6 December 1977 for talks with government officials. The Cuban government received the two representatives in their personal capacity.

They met Dr Carlos Rafael RODRIGUEZ, Vice President of the Council of State, and Dr Santiago Cuba FERNANDEZ, Attorney General of the Republic, as well as judges from the *Tribunal Supremo Popular* (Supreme Court of Justice). They also had talks with officials from the ministries of interior and foreign relations and members of national organizations, including the United Nations Association and the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution.

After meeting prison officials, including the head of the department of prisons, the AI representatives visited the *Combinado del Este* maximum security prison on the outskirts of Havana and an open regime prison known as 'Construction Brigade', accompanied by officials from the Ministry of Interior and Department of Prisons. They were able to talk briefly with prisoners in *Combinado del Este* who had been sentenced for "counter-revolutionary offences". Attempts to meet in private with named prisoners were unsuccessful.

The visit was not intended as an investigation and no information was gathered from sources outside government and official organizations.

The Cuban authorities provided information on the new judicial and penal system and on the re-education program in the "progressive plan". Officials also gave some information on the number of prisoners in various prisons and under different prison regimes.

AI issued a brief public statement on the visit towards the end of December.

The delegates will be reporting on their visit to AI's International Executive Committee □

EXECUTIONS CONTINUE IN BANGLADESH

Concern at reports of continuing executions of people allegedly involved in the attempted military coups in Bangladesh in late 1977 prompted a cable from AI on 19 January to President Ziaur RAHMAN.

During his visit to Dacca on 29 December, AI Secretary General Martin ENNALS had been assured by the President that the executions had stopped. However, the organization has strong reason to believe that executions still continued at that time and that at least 130 and perhaps several hundred military men were executed after September, following summary trial procedures.

In early January AI received a list dated December 1977 of 129 military personnel already executed, as well as the names of 27 others still awaiting execution. The government has not yet published any names of those executed □

DEATHS AND DETENTIONS IN EL SALVADOR

On 6 January AI wrote to President Carlos Humberto ROMERO of El Salvador expressing concern for 62 prisoners whose detention has not been officially acknowledged, and 30 peasant farmers allegedly murdered by members of the security forces or the official civilian and paramilitary organization *Organización Democrática Nacionalista (ORDEN)*.

Most of the 30 people murdered had been briefly detained without judicial warrants, and then killed. Many of the bodies were found in isolated areas and bore marks of torture. Some had been decapitated, had limbs amputated, or were severely disfigured: one victim was only identifiable by an old scar as his scalp and the skin on his face had been slashed off.

AI's letter to General Romero drew attention to the considerable discussion in El Salvador which has accompanied the recent release of a number of political prisoners whose detentions were never officially acknowledged, as well as statements made by these individuals affirming that other detainees are held secretly in various police and military barracks. Particular concern was expressed at evidence that judges assigned to carry out the remedy of *habeas corpus*, to determine the prisoners' whereabouts and the legality of their detention, are consistently obstructed by executive authority at all levels.

AI requested the El Salvador government to order the immediate release of all prisoners now held in secret detention, or immediately bring them to trial. A full inquiry into the 30 killings and measures to

prevent further abuses of this nature were also requested.

Eighty-three pages of documentation accompanied the letter to President Romero. Similar documentation on the 92 cases has also been submitted to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights. The public material is available in stencilled form from AI's International Secretariat on request □

TEN PRISONERS EXECUTED IN CONGO

Ten prisoners were executed in Congo on 7 February after a month-long trial of over 40 people charged with complicity in the assassination of President Marien NGOUABI last year. The 10 prisoners were sentenced to death at the end of their trial on 6 February. A further death sentence was imposed on a Congolese political refugee resident in France.

The trial, which began on 3 January, was the second to be held in connection with President Ngouabi's assassination on 18 March 1977 and the killing several days later of Brazzaville's Roman Catholic Archbishop, Emile BIAYENDA.

Shortly after the two assassinations, seven people allegedly involved in the killings were sentenced to death by a military tribunal and immediately executed. One of these was former President Alphonse MASSAMBA-DEBAT. Twenty other alleged conspirators, including Professor Pascal LISSOUBA, Prime Minister under Mr Massamba-Debat, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment by the military tribunal. AI subsequently took up the cases of seven of the sentenced prisoners, as well as five prisoners detained without trial (July 1977 *Newsletter*).

When news of the sentences was received, AI immediately cabled Congo's President Joachim YHOMBI OPANGO appealing for clemency for the ten prisoners. Following the executions AI expressed regret that they had been carried out almost immediately and without any opportunity for an appeal.

In addition to the 11 death sentences, four people were sentenced to life imprisonment and 17 others received prison sentences. The defendants were represented by state-appointed lawyers, who appear to have had little opportunity to defend their clients □

AI DELEGATES DISCUSS HUMAN RIGHTS WITH INDIAN GOVERNMENT

An AI delegation consisting of Professor James FAWCETT, President of the European Commission of Human Rights and Professor of International Law at King's College, London, and Yvonne TERLINGEN, a member of AI's Research Department, visited India from 30 December 1977 to 19 January 1978.

The delegates met Indian Prime Minister Morarji DESAI, and had detailed discussions with Mr Shanti BUSHAN, the Law Minister, and Mr Charan SINGH, the Home Minister. One of the delegates also met the Chief
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Prisoners of the Month Campaign

Participants in the campaign are reminded that appeals must only be sent to the officials named at the end of each case. In *no* circumstances should communications be sent to the prisoner. It is important for the prisoner that messages to the authorities are worded carefully and courteously and that they are never sectarian.

Stefan Wladimirov GUSENKO, Bulgaria

Stefan Wladimirov GUSENKO, a 50-year-old electrician, was arrested on 18 September 1976 and sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment for distributing "anti-communist literature". Before his trial on 28 December 1976 Mr Gusenko was kept in solitary confinement at the central prison in Sofia, Bulgaria, and his wife and two children, aged 12 and 15, were not allowed to see him.

According to *AI* information, Mr Gusenko was tried, charged and sentenced only for possessing and distributing western literature to his friends. He was known at work and by his friends to have criticized working conditions and violations of human and civil rights by the Bulgarian authorities.

The two articles in the Bulgarian penal code under which Mr Gusenko was reportedly sentenced proscribe non-violent activities. Article 108 carries a term of up to 8 years' imprisonment for individuals who "intend to weaken the power of the Bulgarian People's Republic, propagate fascist or anti-democratic ideologies, support acts against the People's Republic or publicly incite these acts, or if they disseminate derogatory statements which harm the social order, or disseminate literature which advocates any of these practices". Individuals who "disseminate untruthful statements which could incite mistrust amongst the Bulgarian people of the power of the state, or confusion in society" are liable to a term of up to 2 years' imprisonment under article 273.

Mr Gusenko's present place of detention is not known to *AI*. His wife and relatives are apparently under constant surveillance and have reportedly been harassed by members of the Bulgarian secret police.

Please write courteously worded letters urging the immediate release of Stefan Wladimirov Gusenko, to: Mr Todor Zhivkov, Chairman of the State Council, Sofia, Bulgaria.

Ahmed Fu'ad NEGM, Arab Republic of Egypt

Ahmed Fu'ad NEGM, a 48-year-old poet, was arrested in January 1977 following the countrywide food riots in Egypt (March 1977 *Newsletter*). He was later released pending trial, but re-arrested on 16 November after attending an illegal political meeting with several students at Ain Shams University in Cairo. On 29 November Mr Negm and 21 other political detainees began a hunger strike in protest against their detention and unsatisfactory prison conditions.

Although no date has yet been set for Mr Negm's trial, his case will appear before a military tribunal, rather than a civil court.

Ahmed Fu'ad Negm had been arrested several times before, either for membership of an illegal political organization, or because of his poetry which has often been critical of the government.

Mr Negm is detained at Tora prison, and *AI* is particularly concerned for his health. He is known to be suffering from a chronic stomach ulcer, which reportedly started to haemorrhage during his detention.

Please send courteously worded appeals urging the immediate release of Ahmed Fu'ad Negm to: His Excellency President Muhammad Anwar Sadat, Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mrs Nurtjahja MURAD, Indonesia

Nurtjahja MURAD, aged 42, was born in West Sumatra, Indonesia. At an early age she moved to Jakarta and, after completing her studies, became a teacher of Indonesian. In 1959 Mrs Murad obtained a scholarship to study Russian language and literature at the Lumumba University in Moscow. After graduating in mid-1965, she returned to Indonesia a few weeks before the abortive coup in October of that year. She is married to Murad Aidit, the younger brother of the late Communist Party chairman D N Aidit.

Soon after the attempted coup Mr Aidit was arrested and detained for two years. During this time, Nurtjahja Murad taught in a secondary school and supplemented her income by part-time work as a dressmaker to support her four children. Her husband was released in 1967 but re-arrested in September 1968, along with Nurtjahja Murad, who took her fifth and newly-born child into detention with her. The couple were arrested along with several other graduates from Soviet and Eastern European universities who were regarded as security risks because of their academic training in communist countries.

Nurtjahja Murad had not played a political role in the Soviet Union or in Indonesia after her return. The accusations against her probably relate to her status as wife of Murad Aidit, who was more politically active than herself, and as sister-in-law of the chairman of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI).

After about nine months in detention camps in Jakarta, Mrs Murad was transferred to Bukit Duri prison in May 1969 and placed in solitary confinement. In 1970 she suffered a severe attack of gallstones and was in hospital for 40 days. On her return to Bukit

Duri she was again placed in isolation and her health deteriorated. Only in early 1971 was the isolation decree lifted.

In 1971 Mrs Murad was moved to Plantungan Women's Detention Camp in Central Java and in November 1976 transferred to Bulu prison in Semarang with 45 other women from Plantungan. These women, none of whom have been formally charged or tried, are kept in isolation. They were not released in the December 1977 amnesty in Indonesia since the authorities allege they are political "diehards".

Murad Aidit, however, did benefit from the amnesty and has returned to Java after being imprisoned on the island of Buru.

Letters appealing for Nurtjahja Murad's release should be sent to coincide with 21 April—Kartini Day (Women's Day) in Indonesia.

Please send courteously worded letters appealing for Nurtjahja Murad's unconditional release to: President Suharto, Istana Negara, Jalan Veteran, Jakarta, Indonesia.

News of Past Campaigns

The Israeli Attorney General's Office has informed *AI* of the release of Taisir al-ARURI on 19 January.

Mr al-Aruri, who had been detained since April 1974 under the Defence (Emergency) Regulations of 1945, appeared before the Appeals Committee on 1 December 1977 when it was decided not to renew his detention order.

The letter referred to the "thousands of letters" received from *AI* members appealing on behalf of Mr al-Aruri (November 1977 *Prisoners of the Month Campaign*).

Prisoner Releases and Cases

The International Secretariat learned in January of the release of 195 prisoners under adoption or investigation and took up 155 new cases.

AI Delegates Discuss Human Rights with Indian Government

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Ministers of Kerala, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, and the Governor of Andhra Pradesh. Professor Fawcett met the Chief Justice of India and judges of the Supreme Court and High Courts of Delhi and Calcutta. He addressed members of the Supreme Court Bar Association in New Delhi as well as the Indian Law Institute there. In Calcutta, Professor Fawcett addressed the High Court Bar Association. The delegates visited Tihar Jail in New Delhi, Presidency Jail in Calcutta and Hyderabad Central Jail, Andhra Pradesh.

The delegates met various lawyers, members of civil liberties committees and former prisoners of conscience who had been adopted by Amnesty International.

A report from the delegates on their visit is being presented to *AI's* International Executive Committee meeting on 3-5 March □

APPEAL HEARINGS OF CHARTER 77 ASSOCIATES IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

At an appeal hearing on 5 and 6 January the Czechoslovak Supreme Court upheld the 3½ year sentence passed on agronomist Ales MACHACEK and reduced nuclear physicist Vladimir LASTUVKA's prison term from 3½ to 2½ years.

The two men were arrested on 20 and 25 January 1977 respectively and charged with distributing "illegal" literature including the Charter 77 manifesto. They were sentenced on 28 September 1977 (November 1977 Newsletter).

• On 12 January 1978 the Supreme Court heard the appeals of journalist Jiri LEDERER, writer and theatre director Frantisek PAVLICEK, playwright Vaclav HAVEL and theatre director Ota ORNEST. The court upheld the sentences passed on Jiri Lederer (3 years), Frantisek Pavlicek (17 months suspended for 3 years) and Vaclav Havel (14 months suspended for 3 years), and reduced Ota Ornest's prison term from 3½ to 2½ years.

The four men were arrested in January 1977 for "anti-state activities" (February 1977 Newsletter). On 18 October the Prague Municipal Court sentenced Ota Ornest and Jiri Lederer to 3½ and 3 years' imprisonment respectively for subversion. Frantisek Pavlicek was sentenced to 17 months (suspended for 3 years) for assisting in subversion and Vaclav Havel to 14 months (suspended for 3 years) for attempting to harm the interests of the Republic (November 1977 Newsletter).

AI appealed to the Czechoslovak Procurator General and the Minister of Justice of the CSR on 9 January 1978 to quash the sentences passed on the four men and urged that their appeals be heard in an open court □

PRESIDENT OF BRAZILIAN STM RELEASES 2 ADOPTED POCs

On 25 January Admiral Helio LEITE, President of the Superior Military Tribunal (STM) in Brazil, ordered the release of AI-adoptees Fued SAAD and Stanislaw Alkim MAGALHAES after their lawyers had presented writs of *habeas corpus*. Both were arrested in August 1972 and sentenced to 2½ and 3½ years' imprisonment respectively for attempting to re-organize the Brazilian Communist Party.

Fued Saad, a medical doctor who suffers from a serious heart complaint and diabetes, was not released when his sentence expired in November 1977 but served an extra 2 months. Stanislaw Magalhães, a lawyer, served an extra 13 months at the end of his sentence.

The writs of *habeas corpus* were filed with the STM against the prisoners' continued and unjustified detention. After the release order, the lawyers stated at a press conference in Rio de Janeiro that this was the first time the STM had granted *habeas corpus* to persons charged under the Law of National Security,

as this is forbidden under the Institutional Act Number 5 which gives the president of the country exceptional powers.

However, although both men are free, their cases are not yet closed. When the STM reconvenes it will have to reconsider whether its President was justified in granting *habeas corpus* to the prisoners. Furthermore the tribunal will have to consider the Public Prosecutor's request for longer sentences for Dr Saad and Senhor Magalhães. Until a decision is taken the two defendants will be free □

TANZANIA RELEASES

On 5 February Tanzanian President Julius NYERERE marked the first anniversary of the foundation of *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* ('Revolutionary Party') with an amnesty for over 7,000 prisoners. The majority were convicted petty criminals but the amnesty also included 26 detainees held without trial under the Preventive Detention Act. Among these were two AI-adopted prisoners of conscience—Otini KAMBONA, a former member of parliament and journalist, and his brother Mattiya KAMBONA, a former civil servant—who had both been detained incommunicado since 1967 without charge or trial, except for a few months of freedom in 1972. AI had made many appeals for their release.

Despite renewed appeals, including a petition signed by several prominent British politicians and academics and others, Abdulrahman Mohamed BABU (*Prisoners of the Month Campaign*, October 1977) and other Zanzibar treason trial detainees and prisoners were not released. Seven of those convicted in Zanzibar were freed in August 1977 after serving 5 years of sentences ranging from 7 to 15 years' imprisonment.

However, according to AI information, Zanzibari detainees held at Dodoma prison on the Tanzania mainland were informed by Tanzanian Home Affairs Minister Hassan MOYO in September: "You will stay here till you die". AI has made several protests to the Tanzanian authorities about the use of indefinite detention without trial.

AI cabled President Nyerere welcoming the amnesty and expressing the hope that it would be a step towards further releases □

ISRAEL IMPRISONS JOURNALISTS

AI is closely following the cases of two journalists currently detained in Israel. Hans LEBRECHT, a member of the Central Committee of the Israel New Communist Party who also writes for the French newspaper *L'Humanité* and the Italian newspaper *L'Unita*, was arrested on 18 January along with Panayiotis PASCHALIS, a Greek Cypriot communist and correspondent for the Greek daily newspaper *Haravghi*.

Both men are presently awaiting trial on charges of espionage. Mr Paschalis who is on hunger strike, is being detained for passing on information to enemy agents. This

reportedly consists of photographs of some tourist maps and sites. Mr Lebrecht, his alleged accomplice, is now free on bail □

AMNESTY IN BOLIVIA FOLLOWS HUNGER STRIKE

The Bolivian government has yielded to most of the demands made during a nationwide hunger strike that began on 29 December 1977 and lasted more than 20 days. The hunger strikers were demanding a full amnesty for political prisoners and 348 exiles, as well as the legalization of trade unions. Shortly before the concessions were announced, churches housing the strikers were broken into, and over 100 strikers were detained.

After the hunger strike, 19 political prisoners were still excluded from the amnesty. Bolivian authorities initially stated that the 19 would be placed in the custody of civil courts, although some had already been detained without charge for over two years. On 14 February, however, charges were dropped against the last of the 19 prisoners and all were released. AI has been pleased to learn that all Bolivian prisoners of conscience were at liberty on that date □

AI DELEGATION MEETS PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT

An AI delegation visited Pakistan from 20 to 25 January. AI delegates Professor Mümtaz SOYSAL, Vice-Chairman of AI's International Executive Committee and Professor of Constitutional Law in the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara University, and Yvonne TERLINGEN a member of AI's Research Department, to introduce the organization to the country's military government.

The delegates met the Chief Martial Law Administrator and Chief of Army Staff, General Zia-ul HAQ. They had detailed discussions with Mr A K BROHI, Adviser to the Chief Martial Law Administrator on Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Mr Agha SHAHI, Advisor to the Chief Martial Law Administrator on Foreign Affairs, and Mr Roedad KHAN, Secretary, Ministry of Interior. They also met the Attorney General, Mr Sharifuddin PIRZADA.

In Lahore, the delegates attended a session of the summary military court, trying civilians. In addition, the delegates talked to a number of lawyers, including the defence and prosecution counsels of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali BHUTTO.

A report from the delegates on their visit is being presented to AI's International Executive Committee meeting on 3-5 March □

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Equatorial Guinea: "An Immense Torture Center"

"A thick wall of silence, a silence of terror and of the grave, surrounds everything that goes on there." This is how two escaped political prisoners from Equatorial Guinea describe their country in a detailed testimony recently received by *AI*. In retelling their prison ordeal, the two men charge that Guinean President Macias NGUEMA—during whose nine-year rule a quarter of the country's population has gone into exile—has made Equatorial Guinea into "an immense torture center" where "the way out is the way to the cemetery".

AI considers the report significant in that, for the first time, it provides detailed corroboration of the numerous allegations received over nine years, of brutal murders, torture and inhuman prison conditions in Equatorial Guinea.

The testimony gives names and circumstances of death of 12 prisoners who died after torture in Bata Prison. Two allegedly died after having their eyes torn out by Guinean National Guards. Others died after beatings and bizarre humiliations were inflicted during forced labour. For example, two men were forced to re-enact the crucifixion of Christ, participating in a savage "way of the Cross" accompanied by a group of other prisoners. After their fellow-prisoners were crucified, the remaining group was forced to celebrate a mock-mass over the dying men. The present government of Equatorial Guinea is hostile to the Roman Catholic faith of a minority of the population.

President Nguema himself is mentioned as figuring in one murder, and as having knowledge of another. In the first case President Nguema allegedly ordered a prisoner brought to Bata's airport to hunt rats. When the man failed to catch more than four, the rats and the prisoner were burned alive. In the second case the President referred in a public speech to a statistician whose fingers had been cut off "because he could not count". The actual fate of the statistician—according to witnesses quoted in the report—was even more horrible. The man's fingers, hands, feet and ears were cut off before he died.

In the testimony, general conditions for all inmates at Bata Prison, and especially for the political prisoners, are said to be bad. Up to 18 prisoners can be kept in cells measuring either one meter square, or 2 by 3 meters. Under the harsh regime of prison director Salvador ELA and his deputy Francisco EDU, male and female prisoners work for long hours without any food or drink. Their only food is provided by their families, and those without families can starve to death.

The testimony goes on: "The National Guard invented the most incredible methods

of torture, such as the 'injection' method, where they beat a prisoner on the ribs and testicles, while forcing him to swallow water. Women had thorns and other objects thrust up their vaginas, and then they were raped. If the guards got bored with this, they might tie up a prisoner with wire, pour petrol over him, and burn him alive in the prison courtyard, in front of everyone. . . .

"This method must have seemed too quick to them, for they discovered another method: hanging a man from his hands and feet by nylon cords from a pole parallel to the ground. After a while the weight of the prisoner's body would make the cords cut to the bone. Others would be beaten with clubs until their flesh swelled and wounds appeared. Then the wounds would be sprayed with petrol. The guards would not set the prisoners alight, but allowed the petrol to dry out their wounds in the heat of the sun, splitting the flesh open. People would die, literally split open. Antonio NDO was one of many who died this way". A list of 490 names of civil servants who have died under the regime was published by the Guinean exile community at the end of 1976, but even this cannot be regarded as complete □

MEXICAN PRISONERS DENOUNCE TORTURE

An open letter published last month by 16 prisoners held in Cuernavaca Penitentiary, in Morelos State, Mexico, claims that they have been subjected to severe ill-treatment since their arrest. The prisoners also claim that another prisoner, Gabino PERALTA NUNEZ, died on 1 January as a result of injuries caused by torture which were not given proper medical care.

Methods of torture described in the letter include electric shocks, near-drowning and beatings, especially about the head. Victims were allegedly threatened with death and castration, and with the torture of their wives and children.

The authors of the letter were all arrested between August 1975 and January 1976, and accused of criminal acts including a bank raid and a murder. But the prisoners have repeatedly claimed that the charges are

false, that their confessions were extracted under torture and that they are political prisoners.

Their arrests were followed by periods of incommunicado detention of up to three months, despite the fact that Mexican law requires that detainees be brought before a judge within 72 hours of arrest.

On 9 April 1976 30 Roman Catholic priests from Cuernavaca publicly denounced the breach of procedures and ill-treatment which the prisoners had received: "In their testimonies, the prisoners reveal the existence of a torture center in the 'Los Volcanos' district. We know, however, that torture is not new in the state (of Morelos); and this method is used for obtaining confessions. . . We wish to protest strongly and condemn those violations which are not only contrary to the teaching of Our Saviour Jesus Christ... but also diametrically opposed to the respect due to every individual regardless of race, sex, religious belief or political ideas. Whether [the prisoners are] guilty or innocent of these crimes, torture degrades both those who inflict it and those who endure it."

AI has received substantial evidence that torture has been applied against political suspects in Mexico, and that there are clandestine places used by security forces for interrogation. In May 1977 and again in January 1978 *AI* expressed its concern to the Mexican government about this group of prisoners □

INQUIRY URGED INTO TORTURE IN NAMIBIA

On 26 January *AI* called for an urgent and independent inquiry into the torture of political detainees in Namibia by the South African security police. In a cable to South Africa's Administrator in Namibia, Judge Marthinus STEYN, *AI* also condemned the recent banning of a booklet entitled *Torture - A Cancer in Our Society*, produced by two white churchmen in Namibia.

The 62-page booklet consists largely of sworn affidavits by former detainees alleging that they were subjected to beatings, electric shocks and other forms of torture during interrogation by South African security police in Namibia. These affidavits were used last December in an unsuccessful attempt to obtain a court injunction to prevent the security police from further interrogating or assaulting one detainee. The booklet also includes photographic and medical evidence in support of the detainees' claims.

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appeals

Algirdas ZYPRE, USSR

Algirdas ZYPRE is a 50-year-old Lithuanian held in the psychiatric unit of the central hospital of a complex of corrective labour colonies in the Mordovia ASSR, several hundred kilometers south of Moscow. *AI* is currently investigating his case. Mr Zypre and others claim that he has been hospitalized not for medical reasons, but because he has persistently protested against the 25-year term of imprisonment which he is serving.

In 1944, when Algirdas Zypre was 17 years old, he joined Lithuanian partisans who were fighting the accession of Lithuania to the USSR. Armed activities ended around 1952, but some partisans, including Mr Zypre, remained in hiding. He emerged in the mid-1950s, reportedly in response to an official offer of amnesty to former partisans. He worked as a construction labourer until his arrest in January 1958. Several months later he was convicted of "counter-revolutionary activity" during his years as a partisan.

In complaints to Soviet authorities, Mr Zypre has asserted that his 1958 sentence was 15 years' imprisonment and that he should have been released in 1973. The authorities, however, have told Mr Zypre that his sentence was 25 years. Mr Zypre claims that records of his trial have been falsified to require him to serve 25 years.

Several months after Mr Zypre's 1958 trial, Soviet criminal law was amended so that 15 years became the maximum sentence allowed for imprisonment. This new maximum was made retroactive for most categories of offenders, but political offenders were specifically excluded. A number of nationalist-partisan prisoners are still serving 25-year terms of imprisonment imposed shortly before the 25-year sentence was abolished.

Mr Zypre lodged repeated demands that he be released on the grounds that his sentence had expired, but in October 1973 he was transferred from a corrective labour colony to the psychiatric unit in Mordovia. The diagnosis of prison psychiatrists that Mr Zypre was suffering from "prolonged reactive psychosis" was probably confirmed by the Serbsky Institute of Forensic Psychiatry in Moscow when Mr Zypre was sent there for examination in 1974 and again in early 1977.

Appealing to the USSR Procurator General in February 1977, Mr Zypre alleged that throughout his three and a half years in the psychiatric hospital he had been kept in solitary confinement, that since January 1975 he had been treated with drugs which were "unnecessary" and "gravely impaired his health" and that on two occasions he had been beaten by male nurses. He also claimed that doctors had told him he was not mentally ill, but that treatment would

continue until he agreed that his sentence was 25 years.

Both a former fellow-prisoner of Mr Zypre and his sister, who visited him at the Serbsky Institute, claim that Mr Zypre does not require hospitalization for mental illness.

Please send courteously worded letters to Dr V V Kokorev, head of the psychiatric section of the central hospital of the Mordovia corrective labour colonies complex, expressing concern at reports that Algirdas Zypre has been mistreated there and requesting information as to his diagnosis and treatment: SSSR, RSFSR, Mordovskaya ASSR, Tengushevsky raion 431200, pos. Barashevo, uchr. ZhKh 385/3-2, korpus No. 12, Psikhyyatricheskoye Otdeleniye Bolnitsy ITU, Nachalniku Otdeleniya, Dr V V Kokorevu. Letters should also be sent to Mr Roman Rudenko, Procurator General of the USSR, urging a full investigation of the circumstances of Mr Zypre's confinement in the psychiatric unit: SSSR, g. Moskva, Pushkinskaya ul. 15a, Prokuratura SSSR, Generalnomu Prokuroru, R A Rudenko.

Ananias MAIDANA PALACIOS, Paraguay

Ananias MAIDANA PALACIOS, one of the longest-serving political prisoners in Latin America, is in very bad health. He was recently transferred from Emboscada prison camp to a police clinic. Señor Maidana Palacios suffers from heart trouble and other illnesses contracted during 19 years of imprisonment in poor conditions. His arrest in 1959 was followed by seven months of continuous torture, and his health has continually deteriorated since then. Reports indicate that he is now unable to walk unaided.

Señor Maidana Palacios has been hospitalized several times. In March 1976 he was admitted after a prolonged hunger strike. A doctor's report at the time said he was "suffering from hypertension, stomach ulcers, haemorrhoids, anaemia. . ."

Señor Maidana Palacios was accused of being a communist at the time of his arrest, but in 19 years he has never been brought to trial. For 16 years he was held in a cell with nine other prisoners at *Comisaría Tercera*, a police station in the center of Asunción, where conditions are harsh and ill-treatment of prisoners is common.

Please write courteously worded letters expressing concern about Sr Maidana Palacios' health and requesting that he be released so that he can receive suitable medical attention. Write to: Exmo. Señor Presidente de la República, General Alfredo Stroessner, Palacio de Gobierno, Asunción, Paraguay.

AI REACTS TO EUROPEAN COURT RULING ON TORTURE

On 18 January the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the interrogation practices used by the United Kingdom in Northern Ireland in 1971 were "inhuman and degrading", but not "torture". In

response to the court's ruling, *AI* announced that it would continue to denounce as torture the use by any government anywhere of the interrogation techniques used in Northern Ireland.

AI stated that its continuing effort to combat torture anywhere in the world made it impossible for the organization to follow the restrictive standard set by the European Court.

AI condemned these interrogation practices as torture as early as 1971. At that time the organization stated: "It is a form of torture to force a man to stand at the wall in the posture described for many hours in succession, in some cases for days on end, progressively exhausted and driven literally out of his mind by being subjected to continuing noise, and being deprived of food, sleep and even light." Since then medical and psychiatric evidence has indicated that these procedures have caused long-term physical and mental damage to victims.

Reacting to the recent ruling, *AI* expressed disappointment that the court arrived at its finding despite its reported acceptance that "the five techniques were applied in combination, with premeditation, and for hours at a stretch. They caused, if not actual bodily injury, at least intense physical and mental suffering. . . and also led to acute psychiatric disturbances during interrogation".

AI is studying the full text of the court's decision with a view to preparing an analysis.

AI fears that this ruling may affect individual complaints against the British government currently lodged with the European Commission of Human Rights in Strasbourg. These complaints, referred to the commission between 1972 and 1976, are likely to be dropped or rejected after the court's judgement.

Inquiry Urged into Torture in Namibia Continued from page 1, column 3

The statements contained in the booklet are fully consistent with other information about the use of torture in Namibia which *AI* has received over a period of years and is still receiving. An accumulation of evidence suggests that these practices have become more widespread and systematic than ever before.

In its cable *AI* said: "The need for a full and independent inquiry is extremely urgent as some way must be found of curbing the excesses which are being daily committed by South African security police and military forces against the inhabitants of Namibia. Unless immediate action is taken both by Administrator Steyn and by the 'contact group' of five Western powers currently negotiating Namibia's future with South Africa, there can be little hope of reconciliation and peaceful settlement in the country. We have therefore urged the Foreign Ministers of the five countries—United States of America, France, Federal Republic of Germany, United Kingdom and Canada—to endorse our call for an independent inquiry" □

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seeks**

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Applicants should have had extensive experience of campaigning journalism, foreign news editing (in print or radio/TV) and/or promotional work; interest in international affairs and human rights, including some Third World experience; and must have the ability to coordinate and run a small team. Fluent English essential, together with a working knowledge of French, Spanish and/or German.

Salary £4780 per annum. Closing date 24 March 1978.

For further details and application form please contact: Amnesty International, 10 Southampton Street, London WC2E 7HF, England or 'phone 01-836 7788, Ext 289 .