

#### KUWAIT — UNFAIR TRIAL

Intisar Rasan Khallati, of Iraqi nationality, and her sister, Sabiha Rasan Khallati, a Kuwaiti national by marriage to a Kuwaiti citizen, are both serving 15-year prison terms in Kuwait Central Prison.

The two sisters were convicted by the Martial Law Court between May and June 1991 on charges of “collaborating with the enemy”, after trials which did not conform to international standards for fair trial. Intisar Rasan Khallati, 22 years old at the time of her trial, reported that they were both beaten, trodden on and threatened with electric shocks and execution during interrogation. They had no right to appeal to a higher court.

More than 100 others were convicted of collaborating with the Iraqis by the Martial Law Court, following the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait in February 1991. Reports indicate that torture was routine and widespread in pre-trial detention and AI believes that many of the trials before the Martial Law Court between May and June 1991 were manifestly unfair.

The Martial Law Court was dissolved in June 1991 and cases before it were transferred to the State Security Court, which was itself abolished in 1995. All cases were subsequently transferred to ordinary courts, but the authorities have yet to review the cases of political prisoners sentenced after unfair trials by special courts in previous years.

+ Please write, calling on the Government of Kuwait to carry out a judicial review of the cases of Intisar Rasan Khallati and Sabiha Rasan Khallati, and of others sentenced by the Martial Law Court and the State Security Court since May 1991. Also ask for an independent investigation into the allegations of torture. Send your letters to: His Highness Shaikh Sa‘ad al ‘Abdallah al-Sabah, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, Al Diwan al-Amiri, Kuwait.

#### BRAZIL — KILLING OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST

Francisco de Assis Araújo, a vocal campaigner for the rights of Brazil’s indigenous population, was killed by a gunman in Pesqueira, Pernambuco state on 20 May 1998. He was shot in the head and back as he parked a car outside his sister’s house and died immediately.

As a consequence of his campaigning activities, Francisco de Assis Araújo had been receiving death threats since 1989. The coordinator of a regional indigenous rights group, he defended indigenous land claims against annexation by private landlords. In particular, he supported the land claims of his own indigenous group, the Xucuru, whose traditional lands in the northeastern state of Pernambuco have been encroached upon by large ranches.

Threats have also been made against other Xucuru indigenous leaders, and are believed to come from local landowners and their sympathizers, often linked to the local authorities. Most recently, Francisco de Assis Araújo’s sister received an anonymous telephone call warning her that her cousin, a local city councillor, would be next to die.

+ Please write, urging the Brazilian Government to ensure that Francisco de Assis Araújo’s killing is thoroughly and independently investigated by federal police, and that those responsible are brought promptly to justice. Call for all death threats against Xucuru indigenous leaders to be immediately and thoroughly investigated and for protection to be provided to those who may be at risk. Send your letters to the Minister of Justice: Exmo. Sr. Ministro da Justiça do Brasil, Dr. Renan Calheiros, Esplanada dos Ministérios, Bloco 23, 70064-900, Brasília, DF, Brazil. (Faxes: 55 61 226 7980)

#### MALAYSIA — PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Lim Guan Eng, a prominent opposition member of parliament, faces a three-year prison sentence for speaking out for women’s rights.

In early 1995 Lim Guan Eng made public statements and published a pamphlet accusing the Malaysian authorities of double standards in their handling of allegations of statutory rape of a schoolgirl made against the Chief Minister of Malacca.

Ensuing charges brought against Lim Guan Eng resulted in his conviction for sedition and spreading false news in April 1997, and a fine of RM 15,000 (approximately US\$ 6,000), an amount which would have been enough to disqualify him automatically from parliament. On 1 April 1998 the Court of Appeal substituted the fine with a three-year prison sentence.

Lim Guan Eng remains free on bail pending his final appeal, believed to be imminent. If the Federal Court upholds his prison sentence, he will be a prisoner of conscience, and he will also forfeit his parliamentary seat.

AI believes the case against Lim Guan Eng is politically motivated and a transparent attempt by the authorities to curtail his involvement in public life. In 1987, during a crack-down on social and political activists, he was imprisoned without charge or trial for 18 months.

+ Please write, calling for Lim Guan Eng's conviction to be overturned, to: Dato' Seri Mahathir bin Mohamad, Prime Minister and Minister of Home Affairs, Jalan Dato' Onn, 50502 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. (Faxes: 60 3 238 3784)