

UA 298/00

Fear of F**BELIZE** Estevan Sho (age 23)

An inmate of Hattieville Prison is reportedly facing 10 lashes with a whip. Such corporal punishment contravenes the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to which Belize is party.

Estevan Sho has reportedly been sentenced to 10 lashes with a tamarind whip as punishment for his recent escape from prison. He escaped on 7 September, and was recaptured on 15 September. On 18 September, a panel of Visiting Judges ruled that he be flogged as punishment for his escape. The sentence has reportedly not yet been implemented, and will be carried out at the discretion of the prison authorities, in consultation with the Minister of Prisons, Hon. Dickie Bradley.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Article 52 of the 1957 Belize Prison Rules allows judges to recommend corporal punishment against detainees as punishment for several specific offences. Until this year that practice had not been used since 1975. However, since early 2000 at least three inmates have been flogged, the most recent, Herman Lanza, was flogged on 24 August for allegedly having attacked another prisoner. In July this year Belizean authorities expanded the offences for which corporal punishment can be used to include possession of weapons or attempted escape by inmates.

Amnesty International believes that corporal punishment serves no justifiable penal purpose and brutalizes all those involved in the process. Corporal punishment is in direct contravention of article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." It also contravenes article 7 of the Constitution of Belize as well as international human rights standards.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the report that Estevan Sho is to be flogged, and at the resurgence of the use of corporal punishment;
- stating that you consider the use of flogging as punishment to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, contrary to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- expressing your concern that Belize violates the rights recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by permitting sentences of corporal punishment to be imposed and inflicted in prison.

APPEALS TO:

Minster of Housing, Urban Renewal and Home Affairs
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Prime Minister

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(mark for the attention of the Prime Minister)

Attorney General

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COPIES TO:

Ombudsman

Paul Rodriguez
56 Regent Street
Belize City

Newspapers

Amandala

Amandala Press
3304 Partridge St.
PO Box 15
Belize City
Belize

Fax: + 501 2 75 934

The Belize Times

PO Box 506
3, Queen St.
Belize City
Belize

Fax: + 501 2 31 940

and to diplomatic representatives of Belize accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 November 2000.