

**1996 UN COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON THE COMMISSION TO TAKE ACTION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CHINA, COLOMBIA, INDONESIA AND EAST TIMOR, NIGERIA AND TURKEY.**

Amnesty International challenges the Commission to act to stop human rights violations. "There is no shortage of information. Year after year, the Commission is confronted with well-attested information from its own Special Rapporteurs and Working Groups, treaty bodies, governments and from non-governmental organizations. Yet the Commission still fails to take effective action," the human rights organization said.

"Amnesty International refuses to give up on the Commission, which remains the international community's main human rights body charged with the protection of human rights." Amnesty International said today. "We call on the Commission to respond immediately to the flagrant violations of human rights in **China, Colombia, Indonesia and East Timor, Nigeria and Turkey**. The suffering of the victim demands nothing less."

"Governments, whose votes are weighted in favour of political and economic considerations, have ignored widespread imprisonment of people brave enough to exercise their fundamental freedoms. They have remained silent in the face of endemic torture and ill-treatment of detainees by security forces, and extrajudicial and mass executions," Amnesty International said.

The Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions has voiced his concerns about violations of the right to life in China; in 1993, the Committee against Torture reported patterns of torture in China and the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has concluded that people in China have been arbitrarily detained in violation of international human rights standards.

"Rather than again abdicating its responsibility through "motions to take no action", the Commission must examine China's human rights record, adopt a resolution, and call on the Chinese Government to ratify and respect human rights treaties and allow the UN human rights protection experts access to the country," Amnesty International said.

"This year the Commission has a responsibility to take action on the human rights situation in Colombia. It should follow the recommendations of its own experts," the human rights organization said.

The Special Rapporteur on torture and the Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions, after visiting Colombia in 1994, recommended the appointment of a special rapporteur, unless the situation improved radically. These special rapporteurs agree, in their reports to the Commission this year, that there has been no improvement in the human

rights situation. Amnesty International joins these experts in calling for the appointment of a special rapporteur.

The Commission itself adopted a resolution on East Timor in 1993 which included a set of concrete recommendations to the Indonesian Government. Reports on Indonesia indicate that the human rights violations that take place in East Timor are a reflection of a pattern of violations throughout Indonesia.

The government's failure to implement most of the recommendations in the Commission's resolution was met only by statements from the Chairman of the Commission during its last two sessions. This year, Amnesty International challenges the Commission to examine whether the government has fully implemented the recommendations made in the resolution and Chairman's statements and to take effective action.

The executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni prisoners are a dramatic example of the long-lasting and widespread pattern of disregard for human rights in Nigeria. The Nigerian Government is now particularly targeting human rights defenders.

Following the public outcry over the Ken Saro-Wiwa case, the international community was finally moved to act. In December 1995 the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on Nigeria and invited the Commission to give urgent attention to the situation in this country. Amnesty International calls for the appointment of a special rapporteur to monitor the situation and to report to the 1996 UN General Assembly.

In Turkey violations of fundamental human rights has been a serious problem for many years. The Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances declared in 1994 that it had received more allegations of "disappearances" from Turkey than from any other country for that year. The Committee against Torture reported in 1993 that torture was systemic in Turkey.

"The Turkish Government has given publicity to a series of cosmetic legal changes which have produced almost no improvement of the situation," according to Amnesty International. "The Commission should, as a minimum, urge Turkey to take immediate steps to address systematic violations of human rights."

"Inaction by the Commission must stop. The Commission must send a clear message to all states that no country, big or small, can avoid international scrutiny," said Amnesty International.

Finally, Amnesty International urges the Commission to take decisive action on the draft of the Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. Progress in the Commission's Working Group, which is drafting the declaration, has been blocked by Cuba, Nigeria, Iran and China; they have used the consensus rule as a veto power. These countries are more interested in protecting governments against the threat of human rights defenders than in protecting the rights of citizens and of those who work for them.

