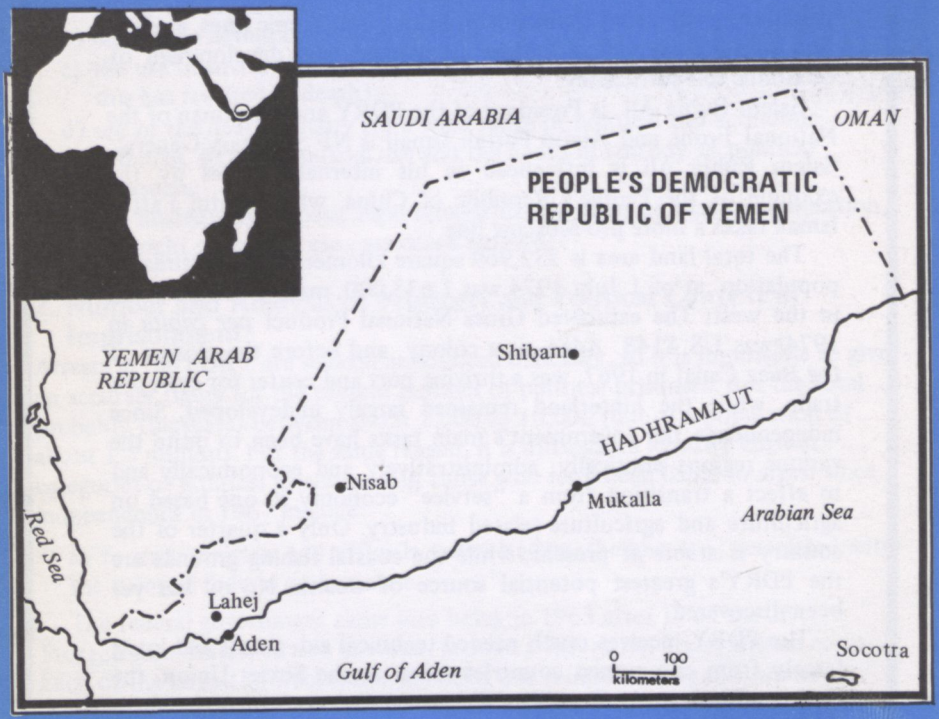
Amnesty International Briefing

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN



May 1976

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN IN OUTLINE

The People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) gained independence in 1967 after four years of bitter fighting against British rule by rival nationalist liberation groups. The country comprises the former colony of Aden and the 23 Protectorate States which had special treaty relations with Britain.

Since independence the PDRY has been governed by the National Liberation Front (NLF), now called the National Front (NF), which, has been committed to the introduction of scientific socialism since 1969: political revitalization of the country and building democratic institutions, transformation of social structures away from traditionalist tribal and Islamic lines, eradication of illiteracy, emancipation of women, and development of economic self-sufficiency.

Salem Rubia Ali is President of the PDRY and Chairman of the National Front and Abdul Fattah Ismail is NF Secretary General. Salem Rubia Ali is influenced in his internal policies by the example of the People's Republic of China, while Abdul Fattah Ismail takes a more pro-Moscow line.

The total land area is 332,969 square kilometers. The estimated population as of 1 July 1974 was 1,633,000, mainly concentrated in the west. The estimated Gross National Product *per capita* in 1974 was US $148. Aden, as a colony, and before the closure of the Suez Canal in 1967, was a thriving port and center for *entrepôt* trade, while the hinterland remained largely undeveloped. Since independence the government's main tasks have been to unite the various regions politically, administratively and economically and to effect a transition from a "service" economy to one based on agriculture and agriculture-related industry. Only a quarter of the country is arable at present, while the coastal fishing grounds are the PDRY's greatest potential source of wealth. No oil has yet been discovered.

The PDRY receives much needed technical aid, grants and loans largely from communist countries (such as the Soviet Union, the German Democratic Republic, China and Cuba), from some Arab countries (such as Algeria, Libya, Iraq and Kuwait), from United Nations organizations and from the World Bank.

People's Democratic Republic of Yemen

1. Introduction

After independence, the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) retained its former colonial legal system but superimposed stringent legislation designed to assist in the introduction of socialism and to ensure political conformity. Consequently, and also because of the impotence of a legal profession depleted by emigration, human rights safeguards are grossly inadequate and depend less on structural forms than on influence or accident. The issues of particular concern to Amnesty International include:

a) wide-scale arrests or disappearances of suspected political opponents or criminal offenders and/or their relatives;
b) large scale detention without trial;
c) the use of torture for eliciting information or confessions (in some cases this has resulted in death);
d) use of the death penalty for a wide range of political and economic offences, its extra-judicial use and the death in custody of political prisoners;
e) the inadequacy of basic legal safeguards: the right of legal representation, the right of appeal, etc., are often ignored.

2. Number and Analysis of Prisoners and Political Context of Imprisonment

Arrests in the PDRY are seldom announced officially, so it is impossible to give an accurate figure for the present number of political prisoners. But the total probably fluctuates between about 2,000 to 10,000 (out of a population of about 1.5 million). For the same reason, it is difficult to identify current categories of political prisoners. But those who have been liable to arrest since independence in 1967 include:

a) former ministers and officials, tribal leaders, sheikhs, etc., associated with the colonial federal government.

The federal government came into being in 1963 after 17 of the 23 Protectorate States, as well as Aden, formed a federation under British control. Each of the largest protectorates provided one minister each, and Aden four. Immediately before or after independence most of those associated with the federal government left the country. Those who remained were arrested. A number of ministers were tried - some *in absentia* - of whom five are still in prison. Many more in prison were never charged or tried. Some have since been killed.

b) members or former members of the nationalist liberation group FLOSY (Front for the Liberation of South Yemen).

FLOSY was one of the rival liberation groups that fought first against the British presence in Aden during the state of emergency between 1963-1967, and later fought each other. This accelerated the British withdrawal from the colony. In November 1967, the federal government collapsed and authority was ceded to the other liberation group, the National Liberation Front, which claimed to control most of the country. Immediately before and after independence, FLOSY members or supporters were arrested (and often severely tortured for information). After June 1969, the government invited exiled nationalists to return, but those former FLOSY members or supporters who did so and whose loyalty to the Aden government was in doubt were liable to arrest.

c) members of the National Front (NF).

i) Members or supporters of Qahtan Ash Shaabi's so-called rightwing branch of the NF. Qahtan Ash Shaabi, the first president of the newly independent country, was overthrown on 22 June 1969. Attempts by Qahtanists to stage counter-coups during 1969 and 1970 were unsuccessful and led to the execution, imprisonment or exile of those responsible. Qahtan Ash Shaabi himself is believed to be under house arrest in Aden, although this has never been confirmed officially.

ii) There now appears to be no *organized* political opposition in the country, but within the NF, the sole political party, those suspected of disloyalty to the government are liable to arrest. Since suspect members of the party are considered a particularly serious threat, their treatment can be more severe and their sentences, if they are tried, may be heavier. Those who come readily under suspicion are NF members (especially members of the armed and security forces) who acquire too much influence and popularity, as well as former associates or supporters of Qahtan Ash Shaabi.

d) persons suspected of undertaking acts of sabotage or having contact with South Yemeni militants abroad.

Until 1972, perhaps the most serious threat to the government came from South Yemenis abroad, particularly those in military camps across the border in the Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) and Saudi Arabia. Their acts of sabotage led finally to a full-scale war (during September/October 1972) between the PDRY and YAR. Local inhabitants suspected of collaborating with these militant exiles were arrested, interrogated and tortured, and in some cases executed. A ceasefire at the end of October1972 brought the hostilities to an end, but minor skirmishes may still continue. (The PDRY and the YAR, historically divided, are now further separated by diametrically opposed political systems. However, the Yemenis consider themselves as one people, and the PDRY government officially advocates the establishment of a "united democratic Yemen". A proposal for economic and political union agreed upon in October 1972 has not yet been realized though efforts in that direction continued).

e) persons suspected of spying or having contact with foreign governments.

The PDRY government is particularly sensitive to the question of security. The preamble to the Homeland Preservation Law of 1974 (see page 4) very much reflects the government's fear of "secret agents" and perhaps explains its over-reaction to cases of suspected espionage:

> "By virtue of the position of our Republic and its attitude towards the socialist system, the working class movement and the Arab and World Liberation Movement, it is subject to the activities of imperialist and reactionary intelligence organizations. . . (which) never stopped for a moment to allow the Yemeni people to breathe and to lay the foundation of their new order. They endeavoured to hinder the positive steps of the national regime, using their old methods of direct military intervention and organizing plots internally."

The physical and ideological isolation of the PDRY, as the only "communist" country in the Arab world, and its vulnerable position, surrounded as it is by hostile countries on three sides, explains its xenophobia. This has been directed particularly towards the United States: three US citizens were detained without trial for up to three years, allegedly for spying; a Lebanese employee of the US firm National Cash Register is still in detention; seven employees of another US firm, International Telephone and Telegraph, including one Lebanese citizen, were tried in the summer of 1975 for espionage and sabotage. Six were given prison sentences of 5-15 years.

f) other critics or opponents of government policies.

These cover all sectors of society and probably account for the largest number of political prisoners. The imposition of radical economic, political and social changes on a largely conservative, tribally-based and deeply religious society has been unacceptable to many South Yemenis. The agrarian reform program met with opposition from traditional landowners. The mercantile class of Aden was severely affected by the economic hardships which followed independence. The government's austerity measures and nationalization program have been unpopular and protests have led to wide-scale arrests.

As many as 250,000 people, perhaps more, have left Aden since 1967, in many cases to find more remunerative work abroad. Those who are caught attempting to leave illegally, usually by crossing the northern border into the Yemen Arab Republic, are also liable to arrest.

Economic offences such as bribery, embezzlement, corruption, evasion of taxes, etc., are classed as "political" crimes in accordance with Law Number 11 of 1970, and can be capital offences.

g) arrests can also be personally motivated, and a person with the authority to arrest and detain can, and often does, use his position of power to settle old scores.

3. Legal situation

In March 1976 the PDRY promulgated a newly drafted penal code. Until this time, the existing legal structure had been based on the British system, although in practice it had applied only to criminal prisoners. Political detainees fell outside the normal process of law and were subject to the arbitrary decisions of the security services or other bodies which carried out arrests. A number of decree laws have been introduced since independence to cover political offences, but the few prisoners who are brought to trial in accordance with this legislation have been usually only those suspected of sabotage, espionage or economic offences, or well known personalities.

Republican Decree Number 27, 1968. This established a People's State Security Supreme Court to "hear cases prejudicial to the interests of the people and the revolution under the leadership of the NLF as well as cases detrimental to the security and safety of the Republic" as specified in a list of 30 rather vaguely-worded offences, of which 17 were punishable by death or imprisonment not exceeding 15 years.

This decree was used specifically in relation to former ministers and those associated with the pre-independence government. They were tried in 1968–some *in absentia*–charged with high treason and feudalism. Six were sentenced to 10-15 years imprisonment with hard labour, of whom five are still in detention.

Law Number 11, 1970. This established People's Courts to deal with cases prejudicial to the aims of the revolution and the people and cases relating to the security of the state. The law contains a list of 29 multiple offences of which 15 are punishable by "death or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 15 years, together with forfeiture of property and exile for a period not exceeding three years". Offences range from sabotage and political opposition of any kind to certain economic offences such as embezzlement, bribery and corruption.

Law Number 40, 1974. This is entitled "The Homeland Preservation Law" and is a directive, with a list of security regulations, which aims at raising the degree of security consciousness particularly among civil servants who may have access to sensitive information. No offences or punishments are specified, but article 4 states: "Whosoever fails to implement the directives appearing in the booklet to this law renders himself subject to trial in accordance with laws in force."

Penal Code, March 1976. This is the first Yemeni penal code based purely on local requirements, and contains much that is an improvement on previous legislation. For example, the preamble very strongly and clearly advocates the observance of basic human rights, and there are provisions for suspended sentence and for reform homes for young offenders.

With the promulgation of the penal code, the three decree laws mentioned above

are repealed, although their essence is incorporated into the new penal code, specifically in chapter 2 concerning crimes against the internal security.

As in Law Number 40 of 1974, this section begins with a directive defining citizens' responsibilities in the maintenance of the security of the country. It advises caution and discretion in their relations with each other and with foreigners, and in their handling of what the government considers to be potentially sensitive information. The penalties prescribed in the chapter are in most cases lighter than those in Law Number 11 of 1970: the maximum prison sentence is 10 years, although most are 1-5 years.

There are, however, still three capital offences (see page 9). Furthermore, the vagueness of the wording of some of the articles in this chapter provide many loopholes and leaves the responsibility for deciding upon the gravity of a particular case solely on the judge.

i. Legal/administrative detention procedures

a) *The judiciary.* The People's State Supreme Court set up by Republican Decree 27 consisted of three members appointed by the National Front and the armed and security forces. The People's High Court consists of a president and two members appointed by the chairman of the Presidential Council.

The country suffers from an insufficiently-manned judiciary, and members of the court usually have little training or experience. Many lawyers left the country after 1967, and only a few qualified members of the legal profession remain. The establishment of a Soviet-assisted law institute in Aden a few years ago was an attempt partially to solve this problem. Graduates of the one-year course become legal clerks, or magistrates in rural areas.

While the judiciary was structurally independent of the executive before independence–and remains so in theory–the present smallness of their numbers has reduced their strength and effectiveness. A lawyer, Tawfiq 'Az'azi, reportedly was kidnapped from his home in 1972 after refusing to convict and sentence some political detainees and ordering their release because he claimed they had committed no offence under the penal code. He has not been seen or heard of since.

b) *Arrest process.* Although Law Number 11 provides for arrests to be made by order of the minister of interior only, in practice any member of the security, the military or police forces and high ranking members of the National Front have the power to arrest and detain. There is little or no systematic coordination within or between these institutions, although all these bodies may receive instructions from the security forces and are obliged at such times to carry them out.

There are no officially accepted detention procedures, no apparent limit to the time a person can be held incommunicado, without appearing before a court, and without being tried, if he ever is. Very seldom does a lawyer have the opportunity of working for a political prisoner, and if he does, his role is usually limited to advising the family and writing appeals to the government on the prisoner's behalf. He rarely has access to his client in prison.

c) *Conduct of trials.* Although the 1968 decree provided that an accused person could either defend himself personally or be represented by a lawyer, the 1970 law provides that "the accused person shall have the right to defend himself in person". Only once, to AI's knowledge, has a defence counsel been permitted. This was when nine persons were tried in a criminal court of the Supreme Court of Aden (May-July 1975) on charges of spying for International Telephone and Telegraph and the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Whether a trial is to be held in open or closed court is decided by the judge. In practice, however, members of the public may be afraid to attend in case their interest is interpreted as support for the defendants. The spy trial mentioned above was broadcast on the radio, but this was an unusual departure.

No provision is made for appeals to a higher court, not even from a People's Court to the People's High Court. Death sentences can be commuted only by the President.

d) *Release process.* There is no formal review system and since most prisoners are untried and unsentenced, some are inevitably forgotten. Releases are often as arbitrarily decided as arrests: if a person is fortunate in having friends or contacts in influential positions, he can hope for their intervention with the authorities on his behalf. He can also buy his release, although the price is usually very high (up to 100,000 shillings, the equivalent of about US $14,000) and is normally granted only to such people as landlords or traders who have been arrested for criticism of economic policies. This money is not refundable, and the amount can fluctuate according to the status of the prisoner and the whim of his custodian. Bail pending trial is rarely granted.

Appeals by detainees for remission of sentence can be considered and granted by the President only.

ii. International legal instruments

The PDRY is a member of the United Nations but has not ratified the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic and Social and Cultural Rights, or the Optional Protocol to the international covenants. PDRY is also a member of UNESCO, the International Labour Organization, the World Health Organization and the Arab League.

4. Location of Detention Centers and Prisons

Al Mansura prison in Aden is the central prison, but more than 45 other places of detention and custody, both in Aden and the surrounding countryside, are known to have been used for political prisoners, although their existence has been officially denied. These would be purpose-built prisons dating from pre-independence times (smaller than Al Mansura), military camps, former private houses or buildings or police stations. Unconfirmed reports exist to the effect that political prisoners are also held on the island of Socotra, which lies 350 kilometers off the mainland in the Arabian Sea. Prisons are run by the ministry

of interior, but detainees can be held in custody and detention in almost any place to which the security forces have access. Military camps are widely used.

In Aden there are five police stations and about five army camps (to which the security forces have access). The main detention center is Al Fatah camp, (Ma'askara Fatah), situated in Tawahi, near the presidential palace. Prisoners are transferred to Al Mansura only when they have been tried, or at least after a considerable time.

5. Conditions of Detention

Al Mansura prison was built before independence on the lines of a modern British prison, and was designed to house 600-700 prisoners. This is considered a "model" prison, for both political and criminal prisoners, and conditions are relatively good. Some cells are large and airy, others are smaller, individual cells. There are work, educational, medical and recreational facilities, but it is not known whether they are available for all prisoners. In the same way, there are regulations allowing fortnightly family visits (which are supervised), the supplying of food parcels (of cooked food only) and written communications between prisoners and their families (which are censored). But reports say that these regulations are arbitrarily applied. Families of unconvicted prisoners are officially eligible for financial assistance, but families of some convicted prisoners may also receive relief.

Al Fatah camp and other places of detention are reported to be poor in comparison with Al Mansura prison. Cells are small and poorly ventilated. Toilet facilities are grossly inadequate and prisoners are allowed to relieve themselves twice a day only. Bathing is restricted to once a week on Friday, but no soap is provided. Food rations are meagre and consist of tea, beans and bread for breakfast and dinner, and rice with a little fish and some vegetables for lunch. Medical facilities are limited to a visiting pharmacist who may prescribe pills. There are no educational or recreational facilities.

Prisoners held in detention centers have negligible rights. Most are held incommunicado in solitary confinement for many months, or their families are not informed of their whereabouts, or they are not allowed visits for many months, and then perhaps only on feast days.

On the whole, considerable perseverance is required on the part of the family or the prisoner before any rights or privileges are granted. Personal influence or connections enjoyed by a family can also make a difference to a prisoner's treatment.

6. Torture Allegations

Frequent reports from former detainees claim that torture takes place in prison for the purpose of eliciting information or confessions. The constitution forbids the use of torture and it has been officially denied that interrogation lasts for more than an hour or so. But the frequency and consistency of the allegations and the absence of adequate legal protection for detainees support the belief that torture does take place.

Any member of the security force can conduct interrogations which may take place many months after a prisoner's arrest. The prisoner is either taken to a

special room within the detention center or by car to some deserted place outside town. The techniques that have been described include:

> beating with the hand, ruler, wooden (nailed) stick, leather strap or rifle butt, kicking, cigarette burns, plucking out the eyebrows, eyelashes and nails, mock executions, semi-castration, electric shocks, injection of harmful drugs, solitary confinement, forcing a prisoner to maintain a particular stance for many hours, various kinds of psychological torture, gross neglect.

The presence of East German and Cuban officials during interrogation has been reported on occasion. It is also said that they have been responsible for introducing sophisticated torture techniques. (East Germans and Cubans are present in the PDRY as advisers to the ministry of interior and ministry of education, and have established positions within the ministry of state security.)

Medical treatment is usually available–perhaps more readily so after confession–and is administered either by the interrogator or a visiting pharmacist or nurse. Where there is serious injury, prisoners are taken to a special wing of the military hospital. Major operations and long periods in hospital have sometimes been necessary, although more often the prisoner is returned to his cell for the night. In some cases torture, or gross neglect, has resulted in death or in nervous and mental disorders.

There have been no known official inquiries into allegations of torture nor any known prosecutions of those responsible for such treatment. However, during the International Telephone and Telegraph (ITT) trial (see page 6)–the first trial to be held in public–the defendants alleged they had been subjected to severe torture in Al Fatah camp by security officers. One had a broken leg, another had nails in his stomach. The widespread publicity of this case and the public outrage it engendered resulted in a definite reduction in the indiscriminate use of torture (although it is still very much practised in certain cases). Thus, while the use of torture is certainly an administrative practice, the government has also been instrumental in bringing about a lessening in its use.

7. Released Prisoners

The majority of detainees held by the security forces are released under indefinite bond. They are kept under constant surveillance, are unable to leave the country and are liable to re-arrest.

Some released prisoners, particularly National Front members, are reported to be rehabilitated with financial assistance from the government. Most released prisoners (as is the case with most of the population) face difficulties in finding jobs or in getting permission to leave the country. Anyone who does leave the country illegally risks confiscation or his property and/or arrest of a member of his family as hostage.

8. Capital Punishment

Fifteen of the 29 offences listed in Law Number 11 of 1970 were punishable by death. Official sources admit that *at least* 35 people were judicially executed between 1972-1974 for committing alleged acts of sabotage, espionage or embezzlement.

The security legislation contained in the new penal code (see page 4) provides for the death sentence for three offences: organizing armed aggression against the state; contravening security regulations connected with the movement of air, sea or land transport, resulting in a serious incident; hijacking that results in significant damage to life or property.

The right of appeal does not appear to be a statutory right. It was officially admitted that eight young graduates who were sentenced to death in October 1973, having been convicted by a People's Court for spying, were not allowed the right of appeal, although they were allowed a defence lawyer of the government's choosing.

Death sentences can, however, be commuted by the president. In June 1975 two North Yemeni merchants were sentenced to death for having illegally attempted to transport merchandise and money across the border from the PDRY to the YAR. A 10-day period of grace was allowed them in which the president could commute the sentence. It is not known whether these sentences were commuted or not.

Recent events indicate a possible change in government policy towards the infliction of capital punishment. In July 1975 nine people were convicted by a criminal court of spying for ITT and the United States Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) and of sabotage. They were sentenced to terms of imprisonment of 5-15 years, although this had been a capital offence and the prosecution had called for the death sentence.

There have been many reports of extra-judicial executions. In 1972 there were reports of four groups of political prisoners (66 in all) killed during transfer from one prison to another "while trying to escape". Many of those killed were members of the former government and ruling class, and it is alleged that these killings were part of government policy to eliminate such leading tribal figures. Three of the incidents took place in October and, in an Amnesty International news release in February 1973, an AI spokesman said:

> "We find it curious that security can be so lax that separate batches of detainees being transferred from one prison to another can escape three times in one month, and at the same time security can be strong enough for all of them to be killed in the process."

In September 1972 in the town of Nisab, in the third governorate, a government-engineered peasant uprising against local landowners resulted in the arrest of 60 people and the death of 15. These 15 were from the ruling section of the Upper Aulaqi tribe and members of the Ahl Haddad Sayyids. One of them, a religious leader, Qadi Ahmad Ibn Haddad, was dragged from his home and left in the street to die.

It has been suggested that this incident (and other similar incidents) was the result of a blood feud between two different tribes, and that one tribe, acquiring power and influence by vitue of its membership in the National Front, used its

power to take revenge on another tribe.

As far as is known, none of these incidents has been investigated by the authorities, nor those responsible prosecuted.

9. Disappearances

Hundreds of people have "disappeared" in the PDRY since independence. Detainees have disappeared from prison where they had been receiving regular visits from their families. Others have been kidnapped from their place of work, their homes or from the street. Despite persistent inquiries, their families have been unable to find out whether the person in question is dead or is detained in a particular prison.

There are many well documented cases:

–Mustapha Obali, commercial officer at the British Embassy in Aden, disappeared from the market place in Aden on 2 April 1972;
–Abdul Hamid Ghanem, a restaurant owner, disappeared from the Pagoda Restaurant in Khormaksar in Aden in March 1972;
–Murshid Saif Abdul Walid, a laundryman with the 8th battalion, disappeared in Beihan in early 1972;
–Ahmad Ali Salih disappeared in Aden in 1973 one week after returning from the Yemen Arab Republic.

During 1974 up to 150 prisoners were reported to have disappeared from Al Mansura prison. One of them may have been Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Awadh Al Aulaqi, formerly minister of finance in the federal government, who in 1968 was sentenced to 15 years imprisonment on charges of high treason and feudalism. He had been held in Al Mansura prison with others similarly charged and sentenced, but in June 1975 Al Mansura prison authorities denied any knowledge of his whereabouts.

10. Amnesty International Initiatives

(i) In 1966 Amnesty International published a report by Dr Selahaddin Rastgeldi, a Swedish lawyer, alleging brutality by British interrogators in Aden. This led to an investigation by British lawyer Roderick Bowen, on behalf of the United Kingdom government, and to certain improvements in the treatment of prisoners.

(ii) In June 1975 Amnesty International representatives visited the PDRY for high-level government talks. They received considerable cooperation and were given the opportunity to discuss at great length with government officials the question of political imprisonment, detention without trial and non-judicial executions. They also visited Al Mansura prison and talked to some AI-adopted, and other, prisoners. In October 1975 AI sent a report to the government, based on the visit, with a number of recommendations, including:

a) publication of a list of all political prisoners and all untried detainees, and the publication of all future arrests and releases, as they occur;

b) consideration of a general amnesty for all untried political detainees;
c) formulation of official detention procedures;
d) an independent commission of inquiry into police and security interrogation methods and into allegations of torture, and compensation for all torture victims;
e) an independent commission of inquiry into incidents of non-judicial executions, and compensation for families of such victims;
f) consideration of the abolition of the death sentence, or at least the reduction in the number of offences punishable by death;
g) permitting of representatives of an international humanitarian organization to have regular access to all prisons in the country.

As of April 1976, Amnesty International has received no reply from the PDRY government.

(iii) The lack of detailed information on current political prisoners and the uncertainty surrounding cases of disappearances reduces the possibility of large scale adoptions. However, as of April 1976, individual Amnesty International groups were active on the cases of 29 political prisoners. The latter included prisoners who have been tried, and those held without trial; prisoners whose place of detention is known, and those whose whereabouts are unknown; and a few who have disappeared without trace.

Amnesty International urges the PDRY government to release those adopted prisoners who were tried in 1968, on the grounds that the law under which they were charged was applied retroactively, and that those sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment should now be due for release if remission is taken into consideration.

Amnesty International urges the release of untried detainees against whom the government does not intend to bring charges in the near future.

Amnesty International also urges that information be provided concerning those whose whereabouts is not known.

These papers are intended to summarize available information on political imprisonment, torture and capital punishment in a single country. They are designed to be concise and factual and are written primarily for reference purposes.

Since AI is limited by its statute to act only in specific human rights situations, reference is made to the political, economic and social situation in each country *only where this has direct relevance to particular human rights problems.* The information contained in each paper is accurate at the time of publication.

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL is a worldwide human rights movement which is independent of any government, political faction, ideology, economic interest or religious creed. It works for the release of men and women imprisoned anywhere for their beliefs, colour, ethnic origin or religion, provided they have neither used nor advocated violence. These are termed "prisoners of conscience".

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL opposes torture and capital punishment in all cases and without reservation. It advocates fair and early trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of persons detained without charge or without trial and those detained after expiry of their sentences.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL seeks observance throughout the world of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.

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