



Worldwide Action to Ratify Human Rights Covenants

AI's 11th International Council Meeting, held in Cambridge, United Kingdom, from 21-24 September, called for a worldwide campaign for the ratification of the United Nations international human rights covenants by the some 100 countries which have not yet done so. The covenants give legal force to provisions of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, whose 30th anniversary is being celebrated this year.

The campaign will also extend to the ratification of the European and Inter-American human rights conventions.

The council specifically re-affirmed the right of individuals to petition the international or regional human rights monitoring bodies when they believe their rights have been violated. It called for further commitment to this right by governments which are party to the UN covenants and the European and Inter-American conventions on human rights.

The council decided to maintain its present policy of reporting information on human rights violations and to abstain from proposing or supporting sanctions such as boycotts or cuts in aid against governments committing such violations. Where military, security and police assistance involved the transfer of equipment and expertise likely to be used by recipient governments to detain prisoners of conscience and to carry out torture and executions, it was possible for *AI* to oppose such assistance.

The council heard former Philippines Senator Jose DIOKNO attack "fashionable justifications" for authoritarianism in Asian developing countries as "racist nonsense and lies". A former political prisoner under martial law in The Philippines, Mr Diokno had been invited to deliver the 1978 Sean MacBride Human Rights Lecture to the council participants. "What authoritarianism promotes, is not development but repression to support and preserve the status quo", he said.

In reviewing the research done by medical groups within *AI's* continuing Campaign for the Abolition of Torture, the council concluded that no person or animal had been subjected to pain in previous experiments, but that in future *AI* should not sponsor further medical experimentation involving the use of either human beings or animals.

AI's International Council Meeting was attended by 300 delegates and observers from 43 countries and by representatives of 35 international organizations, including

the UN Division of Human Rights, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UNESCO and the Council of Europe. New *AI* national sections in Costa Rica and Turkey were welcomed to the meeting for the first time.

The council re-elected Andrew BLANE of the United States, and elected for the first time Suriya WICKREMASINGHE (Sri Lanka), Edy KAUFMAN (Israel) and Margherita BONIVER (Italy) to serve two-year terms on *AI's* International Executive Committee (IEC). Before the council meeting, Nigel RODLEY of the International Secretariat was elected by the staff as its IEC representative, to serve a one-year term.

AI's international budget for 1979/80 was set at £1.5 million.

- The new IEC, meeting immediately after the council, re-appointed Thomas HAMMARBERG of Sweden as its chairperson and appointed Dirk BORNER of the Federal Republic of Germany as vice-chairperson.

AFRICAN LAWYERS ISSUE HUMAN RIGHTS DECLARATION

The African Bar Association has directed its own member associations and lawyers throughout Africa to become more involved with the establishment of human rights and the maintenance of the rule of law in Africa.

At its third biennial conference, held in Sierra Leone in August, the association adopted the "Freetown Declaration of 1978 on Human Rights in Africa".

The declaration "strongly condemns the flagrant violation of human rights in Africa and in particular in South Africa, Namibia and Zimbabwe and the ill-treatment of political prisoners and opponents in Africa".

The main points of the declaration state:

- That access to the courts of law and due process of law are a fundamental right of the individual;
- That any law which purports or seeks to oust the jurisdiction of the courts on any matter is a derogation from the concept of fundamental human rights and is to that extent obnoxious;

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STATEMENT TO UN ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN DEMOCRATIC KAMPUCHEA

In July *AI* sent a statement to the United Nations Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities concerning allegations of human rights violations in Democratic Kampuchea. The Sub-Commission, which was due to meet in Geneva, Switzerland, at the end of August until mid-September, is to transmit *AI's* statement to the next session of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

The *AI* statement drew the Commission's attention to the grave allegations of human rights violations in Democratic Kampuchea made by refugees who have left the country since 1975. These include:

- summary executions of many people because of positions held by them under the former administration, or because of their opposition to official policies of the present government;
- the arrest and subsequent disappearance of people considered to have committed acts "hostile" to the state;
- the use of cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, in some areas, against people who are detained or singled out for execution;
- discrimination against various groups of the population for their social or religious background.

The statement gave examples of refugees' reports on executions, disappearances and maltreatment. For instance, a 15-year-old boy, YIM Sot Tannakit, alleged that in February he witnessed the execution of 77 villagers in a forest near the village of Utra (Siem Reap province, in the north west of Kampuchea). According to Yim, the villagers were accused of being "rebellious traitors". They were allegedly taken to the forest with their arms tied behind their backs and were killed by Khmer Rouge soldiers who hit them on the back of the neck with shovels. Yim alleged that he was himself clubbed and left there, presumed dead, but survived and managed to flee.

Other refugees stated that in some areas any act considered "disobedient" by the local authorities was likely to be punished at their discretion, without any process of law or formal safeguards. A refugee named KONG Samrach, who worked for 18 months until June 1977 in a village near Staung in Kompong Thom province, alleged that anyone who was found to have had sexual relations outside marriage was arrested, brutally mutilated and left to die.

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Statement to UN on Human Rights in Democratic Kampuchea

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According to further refugee reports, purges of civil and military leaders of the present administration took place in 1977, after some regional leaders tried to organize opposition in various provinces of the country. Those purged were allegedly either summarily executed or taken away to unknown destinations.

Several refugees who arrived in Thailand in August this year have also reported that in their local areas a new purge began in June and July of local officials, as well as former soldiers and minor officials of the previous administration. These refugees come mainly from two areas in Battambang province which is near the border with Thailand. They allege that around the end of June Khmer Rouge soldiers started rounding up former soldiers of the Lon Nol army, minor officials, teachers and village headmen.

In its statement to the UN, *AI* said that, although many allegations from refugees of human rights violations in Democratic Kampuchea remain uncorroborated, the number and consistency of these grave allegations gave cause for deep concern. An impartial examination of all available information indicates that fundamental human rights are being grossly violated in Democratic Kampuchea.

AI said it would welcome any steps taken by the government to allow independent international observers to carry out investigations within the country, and to set up appropriate mechanisms to protect the fundamental human rights of individual citizens in Democratic Kampuchea □

African Lawyers issue Human Rights Declaration

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- That any penal law enacted with retrospective effect is contrary to the said concept of fundamental human rights;
- That any violation of these principles in any member country should receive and engage the immediate attention of the association;
- That copies of the declaration should be sent to all member states of the Organization of African Unity and its secretariat.

Following the adoption of the declaration, S. Amos WAKO, Secretary General of the African Bar Association, informed *AI* that he looked forward to "increased cooperation" between the two organizations □

NO AMNESTY FOR ADMINISTRATIVE DETAINEES IN ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Israeli Attorney General, Professor Aharon BARAK told *AI* in August that the special committees set up in Israel (Occupied Territories) to look into the possibility of an amnesty would be reviewing only the cases of persons tried and sentenced by civilian courts

and not those of administrative detainees. Professor Barak was responding to letters sent by *AI* groups appealing for the release of all administrative detainees to mark the 30th anniversaries of both the State of Israel and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Administrative detainees are persons held under an order issued by a military governor and they are never officially charged or brought before a court of law.

The letter also said that nine of the 16 people named by *AI* have been released and gave details of the other seven cases. The Hebrew paper *Haaretz* of 28 July quoted Minister of Justice Shmuel TAMIR as saying that there were 30 people held under administrative detention in Israel and the Occupied Territories □

MORE SOVIET DISSIDENTS SENTENCED

On 15 August Alexander PODRABINEK, 24-year-old founding member of the Moscow-based unofficial Working Commission to Investigate the Use of Psychiatry for Political Purposes and author of the *samizdat* book *Punitive Medicine*, was tried in Elektrostal, a town 40 miles east of Moscow, in the Soviet Union.

Podrabinek reportedly refused to take part in the trial after his request to allow British barrister Louis BLOM-COOPER QC to take part in the proceedings was turned down, and because he was not allowed to call defence witnesses.

Podrabinek was sentenced under article 190-1 of the RSFSR Criminal Code to 5 years' internal exile for "dissemination of fabrications known to be false which defame the Soviet state and social system".

The sole basis for the charge against him appears to be his detailed account in *Punitive Medicine* of the compulsory confinement of Soviet citizens in psychiatric hospitals for exercising their human rights rather than for authentic medical reasons (September 1977 and February 1978 *Newsletter*).

- In August Dr Alexander BOLONKIN, a Soviet mathematician and aviation engineer, was sentenced to a further 3 years in a strict regime corrective labour colony for "stealing state property" only a few weeks before he was due to complete 2 years' internal exile in the Buryat ASSR in Siberia.

Between 1972 and 1974 Bolonkin had served a 4 year sentence in a corrective labour colony on charges of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda" for preparing and circulating *samizdat*. While serving his sentence of exile he was subjected to constant harassment and intimidation by the authorities, and for a year before his arrest he had complained about KGB threats to bring fresh charges against him.

Bolonkin has been adopted by *AI* as a prisoner of conscience.

- Pyotr VINS, aged 22, a Ukrainian Helsinki monitoring group member and the son of the imprisoned religious human rights activist, Georgy VINS, has reportedly been threatened with a new charge of "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda". If this threat is carried

out, he faces a further sentence of 7 years in a corrective labour colony and 5 years' internal exile in addition to the one year sentence for "parasitism" which he has been serving since April in a corrective labour colony in the Rovno region in north-western Ukraine. He was reportedly badly beaten up on two occasions recently by camp officials and began a hunger strike on 29 July □

AMNESTY IN PERU FREES POLITICAL PRISONERS

On 18 July the Peruvian government granted an amnesty and general pardon to all civilians and members of the armed forces sentenced or undergoing trial proceedings in either civil or military courts, for political or social acts.

The amnesty, proclaimed under a new decree, affected all "social-political" prisoners in detention on 18 July. Those released include sentenced prisoners Juan VACCARI CHAVEZ and Alberto PEREZ VERANO, held since 1972. The amnesty also freed those who had been arrested in 1978 during the two-day general strike in May and subsequent disturbances.

Also released under the amnesty were a large number of teachers, detained during a nationwide teachers' strike in May. In addition, 13 trade union leaders and opposition figures who had been exiled were allowed to return to Peru (July *Newsletter*).

Awaiting release when legal procedures have been completed are 13 peasant farmers, adopted by *AI* as prisoners of conscience, who have been imprisoned since 1972 in Chiclayo, Peru. At least six civilian prisoners charged before the military courts and held in the capital, Lima, for over two years, are also awaiting release.

However, one political prisoner may be excluded from the amnesty. Civilian Raymundo ZANABRIA is on trial by a military court for allegedly killing a policeman. Despite the fact that there are political aspects to his case, and that Peru is a party to the American Convention of Human Rights which expressly forbids the death sentence for "political offences or related common crimes", Zanabria could be sentenced to death □

APPEAL AGAINST DEATH SENTENCES IN THE CONGO

On 27 August *AI* appealed to President Yhombi OPANGO of the People's Republic of the Congo on behalf of four prisoners in danger of being condemned to death without trial. In a speech on 14 August President Opango had announced the discovery of a "vast plot against the security of the state". He alleged that the plot involved a planned mercenary invasion of the Congo and that a number of Congolese citizens, as well as foreigners living in the country, were implicated. The President described the four Congolese involved as "incorrigible and

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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.

Roberto SAPIAINS—Chile

Roberto SAPIAINS was arrested in Chile in September 1973 at the time of the coup, when thousands of people were shot or arrested for their support of the deposed government of President Salvador Allende.

Before the coup, Sapiains had been regional secretary in Valparaiso of the *Izquierda Cristiana* (Christian Left) and was a leader for the Valparaiso region of President Allende's party *Unidad Popular* (Popular Unity). He lectured in sociology at the University of Valparaiso and was also, in 1972 and 1973, head of finance at the Development Corporation of Valparaiso and Aconcagua, a public body known as CORDVAC.

After his arrest, Sapiains was charged with numerous offences, including armed resistance to arrest, misuse of funds and smuggling. He was sentenced by a court martial to 8 years' imprisonment and to a further 5 years by a civil court. It is known that he suffered torture and incommunicado detention during the first three months of his imprisonment.

In April 1978, Sapiains' name appeared on a list of 109 prisoners whose release into exile had been negotiated by the Inter-governmental Committee for European Migration (CIME). However, an amnesty announced by the government on 19 April for such prisoners specifically excluded prisoners convicted on charges such as embezzlement, one of the main charges against Sapiains.

Although Sapiains was convicted of criminal offences, he has been adopted by *AI* as a prisoner of conscience because the organization has evidence that his imprisonment was based solely on his political activities.

Please send courteously worded letters, requesting the release of Roberto Sapiains, to: Señor Sergio Fernández Fernández, Ministro del Interior, Edificio Diego Portales, Santiago, Chile.

DOAN QUOC SY—Socialist Republic of Vietnam

Among the tens of thousands of political prisoners still held in re-education camps in Vietnam since 1975 is the well known writer DOAN QUOC SY. Born in Hanoi in 1923, he participated in the independence struggle against the French in the 1940s, within the communist-led Viet Minh movement. His experience during this period, and in particular his critical attitude towards the Viet Minh leadership, are reflected in his novel *Khu Rung Lau* (The Reed Forest).

After the division of Vietnam at the conclusion of the war against France in 1954, many Vietnamese from the communist north, in particular Catholics and members of the old land-owning class, moved to the south where a non-communist government had been set up under Ngo Dinh Diem. They were accompanied by a significant number of intellectuals, including Doan Quoc Sy.

For many years before his arrest in November 1975, Doan Quoc Sy taught at the University of Saigon's Faculty of Pedagogy. In this capacity he travelled extensively in the United States in the late 1960s. During this period he wrote more than 30 novels as well as many short stories and essays.

After the change of government in South Vietnam in April 1975, the new communist authorities announced that many people would have to undergo "re-education".

Many of those sent to re-education camps, such as Doan Quoc Sy, had no connection with the former Saigon administration.

It is thought that the reasons for Doan Quoc Sy's arrest and detention are probably his critical attitude in the past towards the Viet Minh leadership as well as his visits to the United States. Doan Quoc Sy was previously held in the Le van Duyet camp on the outskirts of Ho Chi Minh City (formerly Saigon). This detention center, a former military training camp, reportedly holds many intellectuals and writers. He has recently been moved to a camp in the Vietnamese highlands.

Please send courteously worded letters appealing for the release of Doan Quoc Sy, to: Mr Ton Duc Thang, President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Office of the President, Hanoi, Socialist Republic of Vietnam.

Taieb BACCOUCHE—Tunisia

Taieb BACCOUCHE, a 35-year-old teacher of linguistics at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* in Tunis and a member of the executive committee of the General Union of Tunisian Workers (UGTT), was arrested on 27 January the day after the UGTT had staged a one-day national strike. After 60 days in police custody, Baccouche was transferred to Tunis Civil Prison where he is still held in solitary confinement. Since his transfer he has been allowed access to a lawyer and receives visits from his family twice a week.

Along with other members of the executive committee of the UGTT, Taieb Baccouche is charged under seven articles of the Tunisian penal code three of which carry

the death sentence, and two articles of the press code. His trial was scheduled to begin on 28 September.

Taieb Baccouche has recently been suffering from a rash on his hands and arms. He is married with two young children.

Please send politely worded letters, preferably in French, urging that Taieb Baccouche be brought to trial immediately or released, to: Son Excellence Habib Bourguiba, Président de la République, Tunis, Tunisia; and to: Son Excellence Salaheddin Baly, Ministre de la Justice, Tunis, Tunisia.

PROTESTS AGAINST DEATH SENTENCES IN ASIA

During August *AI* made several appeals against death sentences passed in Southeast Asian countries.

- On 2 August *AI* cabled President Ferdinand MARCOS of The Philippines expressing concern at the death sentence passed on Rolando POE on 10 July for kidnapping and murder. There are at present more than 1,200 people under sentence of death in The Philippines, but fewer than 10 executions have been carried out since the imposition of martial law in 1972.

- In a cable to Prime Minister KRIANGSAK Chamanand of Thailand on 3 August, *AI* expressed concern at the summary execution of two alleged drug traffickers.

Under article 27 of the Thai constitution, the prime minister is empowered to order summary executions following police investigations for a variety of political and criminal offences regarded as dangerous to the security of the kingdom, the throne, the national economy or state affairs.

In its cable *AI* pointed out that summary executions constitute a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This is the second summary execution ordered by General Kriangsak since he came to power in October 1977.

- On 23 August *AI* appealed to President Benjamin Henry SHEARES of Singapore to exercise clemency in the case of Siti Aminah Binti JAFFAR and Anwar Ali KHAN, both sentenced to death on 21 August for drug trafficking. The sentences are now pending appeal. A businessman recently held on drug charges and facing the death penalty if convicted was released from prison when the authorities admitted he may have been framed.

- On 25 August *AI* congratulated Prime Minister Peter KENILOREA on the independence of the Solomon Islands and expressed support for his stand against the re-introduction of the death penalty in the Solomon Islands□

Prisoner Releases and Cases

The International Secretariat learned in August of the release of 169 prisoners under adoption or investigation and took up 229 new cases.

FORGOTTEN PRISONERS 1978

LI Chin-mu, a Chinese-born agricultural labourer, has spent the last 28 years as a political prisoner on Taiwan's Green Island after being tried before a secret military court. Almost no international attention has been focused on his case.

There has been no public outcry on behalf of Bahadin Ahmad MUHAMMAD, a former teacher and mechanical engineer in South Yemen who was last seen being forced into a jeep in 1972. The government has offered Bahadin's family compensation (equal to the sum usually paid after judicial execution) but it denies all knowledge of his whereabouts.

The exact location of Annasoltan KEKILOVA, a Turkmen poet who was arrested in the Soviet Union for criticizing the Central Committee of the Communist Party in 1971, remains unknown to her family and to the outside world. According to the government she is "still interned in a psychiatric hospital".

These are among the forgotten prisoners of 1978.

Their cases feature among 12 histories highlighted by *AI* this year in "Prisoners of Conscience Week", an annual event observed throughout the world in the third week of October. The theme this year is "The Forgotten Prisoners". The same theme appeared as the title of the newspaper article by British barrister Peter BENENSON which launched the *AI* movement in May 1961.

The 12 case studies for "Prisoners of Conscience Week" 1978 cover violations of human rights in El Salvador, Indonesia, Lebanon, Morocco, Nicaragua, Rhodesia/Zimbabwe, Romania, Taiwan, Uganda, USSR, Vietnam and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen. Many of the prisoners are held in

remote areas without access to the outside world. They may be members of subjugated ethnic groups or may be living in small rural communities. According to *AI*, such people are frequently unaware of their legal rights and are cut off from the possibility of international support when they become victims of arbitrary arrest, torture and detention.

In drawing particular attention to the "forgotten prisoners", *AI* points out that peasants and the rural poor face special problems.

Precise information even about large scale massacres of *campesinos* (Latin American peasant farmers), *harijans* (the untouchables of the Indian caste system) or tribal peoples may be virtually impossible to obtain. Often the news will be fragmented or out of date. Frequently the authorities allege that arrests were made in response to an armed uprising or violent incident.

The government of Nicaragua, for example, has given different and contradictory replies to *AI* inquiries about more than 350 known cases of disappearance of arrested *campesinos*. Spokesmen have claimed that the disappeared "never existed", that their names were invented or that unquestionably they were guerrillas killed in combat with troops and buried anonymously.

According to *AI*, the populations of entire *campesino* communities have disappeared as prisoners of the Nicaraguan National Guard, or have been shot outright.

The families of today's forgotten prisoners—often silenced by intimidation or by the lack of financial resources—in many cases simply do not know whether the prisoners are alive or dead □

GOVERNMENT CRITIC RELEASED IN PARAGUAY

Dr Domingo LAINO, who was abducted in Paraguay's capital, Asunción, on 7 July was released from prison on 10 August after a judge dismissed the government's case against him for lack of evidence. Two days after his abduction the authorities had acknowledged that Dr Laino was being held for questioning (August *Newsletter*). Dr Laino is a former deputy and vice-president of the Authentic Liberal Party and an outspoken critic of Paraguay's human rights record.

Following his release, Dr Laino told the Paraguayan press about an interview he had had with Minister of the Interior Sabino MONTANARO. The minister had warned Dr Laino that there might be "certain

popular reactions" against him and mentioned a particular sector of the ruling Colorado Party. The minister has subsequently been criticized in Paraguayan newspapers for implying that the authority responsible for public order cannot guarantee Dr Laino's safety.

- On 11 August, 17 political detainees in Emboscada prison, near Asunción, announced a hunger strike in protest against the government's failure to release them in accordance with a promise made during an earlier hunger strike.

On 30 August some 20 wives and children of the detainees staged a sit-in at the Papal Nuncio's office in Asunción, reportedly after their failure to see the Nuncio about the continued detention of their husbands and fathers □

Appeal Against Death Sentences in the Congo

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thirsty for blood and power" and stated that they would receive neither pardon nor a trial.

AI urged that the four prisoners be given a fair and open trial on the basis of articles 10 and 11 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Several days after the President's speech, however, crowds reportedly demonstrated in the capital, Brazzaville, against the possible summary execution of the prisoners. The Congolese authorities then announced the formation of a new state security court which would try all those accused of complicity in plots against the state. By the end of August no further details had been made public about a possible trial of the four.

AI has already adopted several prisoners who were accused of complicity in the assassination in March 1977 of the then Congolese President Marien NGOUABI. These prisoners, who include former Congolese Prime Minister Pascal LISSOUBA, were sentenced to terms of imprisonment by a military court immediately after the assassination. They were allowed no defence or appeal against their sentences (March *Newsletter*) □

STUDENT ARRESTS IN DJIBOUTI

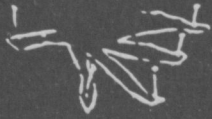
Fifteen members of the *Union Générale des Etudiants de Djibouti* (UGED) were convicted in Djibouti in August on charges under the security laws. They were on vacation in Djibouti from their studies in France. They were arrested for possessing copies of a UGED paper published in France and containing strong criticisms of the Djibouti government.

The students were arrested between 14 and 19 August and charged with various political offences, including attempting to overthrow the security of the state, and offences against the head of state and against neighbouring countries. A French lawyer went to Djibouti to defend the students, but could not obtain a postponement of the trial to enable him to prepare a defence.

AI cabled the Djibouti authorities asking for the trial to be postponed so that the lawyer could prepare a defence, but the trial was held on 24 August. All defendants were convicted and sentenced to fines and prison sentences of one or two months, suspended in some cases.

AI later wrote to President Hassan GOULED expressing concern that the students appeared to have been imprisoned for exercising the right to freedom of expression. *AI* requested him to investigate the allegations of torture made by the defendants during the trial □

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amnesty international

campaign for the abolition of torture

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MONTHLY BULLETIN

Rural Persecution in El Salvador

In a worldwide campaign on El Salvador to begin in October *AI* hopes to bring to international attention the persecution of peasant farmers and rural trade unionists, priests and lay religious leaders in this Central American republic.

The campaign comes at a time when powerful political economic interest groups inside El Salvador call for greater, more drastic repression of rural unions and religious leaders, and of political opposition groups. Every day, newspapers carry full page statements condemning the "terrorist" peasant unions, linking them to the guerrilla groups that operate in El Salvador, and accusing priests of the Roman Catholic Church of being communists and "terrorists".

The violently emotional tone of the mass campaign, and of government calls for drastic action to counter subversion, relates in part to a very real threat of leftwing guerrilla violence. However, it can only be properly understood against the background of an earlier traumatic period of social unrest in El Salvador, when, in 1932, more than 30,000 peasants died in reprisals following a peasant revolt.

Since 1931 El Salvador has been governed by military officers. Today a single political party, headed by the President, General Carlos Humberto ROMERO, controls every seat in the legislature, and the mayor of each town. Most opposition leaders have been exiled, and trade union activity is severely restricted.

Persecution of the peasantry and of the Roman Catholic Church has made El Salvador a major human rights problem area. In the last 18 months the detention, torture and murder of peasant leaders has been reported with alarming frequency. Since President Romero's election in February 1977 violence has also turned against those Roman Catholic priests who support peasant organizations and land reform, with the detention, torture, expulsion and murder of priests and catechists. Much of the persecution is carried out by ORDEN, a para-military rural vigilante force which is directed by the Ministry of Defence and headed by President Romero: ORDEN functions both as a security force and a political organization.

In June this year El Salvador ratified the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR) and pledged under international law to observe its provisions under all circumstances.

The Right to Life: "Every person has the right to have his life respected. This right shall be protected by law. . . No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life" (Article 4, ACHR).

In February 1978 *AI* presented documentation to President Romero on 62 cases of detention followed by disappearance and on 30 murders after detention. Most of the dead and missing were peasant farmers. Bodies of murdered prisoners were found with signs of torture. Some had been decapitated, had limbs amputated or were severely disfigured.

No response has been received from President Romero to *AI*'s inquiry into the 92 cases. Some of those missing may remain in detention in secret cells in the National Guard headquarters in the capital, San Salvador, or in the barracks of the National Police and the Customs Police. Some may lie murdered in unmarked graves.

The Right to Humane Treatment: "Every person has the right to have his physical, mental and moral integrity respected. . . No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment or treatment. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person" (Article 5, ACHR).

Prisoners released after long periods of secret incommunicado detention—illegal under Salvadorean law—report prolonged detention in windowless, almost airless cells, some so small that a prisoner must remain in a crouched or standing position. Released prisoners report severe torture from electric shocks, suspension by the arms, and prolonged, systematic beatings.

The Freedom of Conscience and Religion: "Everyone has the right to freedom of conscience and religion. This includes freedom to maintain or change one's religion or beliefs, and to profess or disseminate one's religion or beliefs, either individually or together with others, in public or in private" (Article 12, ACHR).

The abduction and disappearance, torture and murder of Salvadoreans by government forces relate directly to the freedom of conscience of those who suffer such abuses.

While abduction and disappearance, torture and murder by security forces is clearly illegal under Salvadorean law, the activities of opposition political parties and trade unions, both rural and urban, were restricted by the "Law in Defence and Guarantee of Public Order" (*Ley de Defensa y Garantía de Orden Público*) of November 1977. Under its clauses public meetings have been attacked, opposition communiqués have been censored, union strike action banned and union leaders arrested and prosecuted.

The freedom of Salvadorean citizens to monitor and report human rights violations to national and international bodies and the foreign news media is affected by a section of the law which provides for up to 3 years' imprisonment for those ". . . who propagate orally, in writing or by any other means within the country or who send abroad, news or information which is tendentious or false, destined to perturb the constitutional and legal order, the tranquillity or security of the country, the economic or monetary regime or the stability of stocks and public bonds; those who give access to such news and information in the mass information media and those Salvadorean citizens who while outside the country divulge news and information of this nature".

Also threatened by the new law are the Roman Catholic clergy who "abuse" their clerical status by promoting the Roman Catholic doctrine of social justice, and human rights. Up to 5 years' imprisonment can be inflicted on those who by "taking advantage of their status or personal condition, propagate or foment . . . doctrines that tend toward the destruction of the established public order, or of the political and judicial organization established by the Constitution".

Individual Cases

Felipe SALINAS: Comasagua, March 1977
Felipe SALINAS is a peasant farmer and lay preacher in the village of La Finquita in Comasagua, El Salvador. He was detained at his home by National Guard troops on 5 March 1977, and was stripped and severely beaten while questioned about his activities and those of the parish priest. He was taken several miles from the village, and was dressed in a red robe and a paper crown. A wooden cross was tied on his back. He was found by a roadside, still bound and unconscious, by villagers several hours later.

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appeals

URUGUAYANS MISSING IN ARGENTINA

There is increasing concern at the fate of Uruguayan citizens who have disappeared in Argentina during the last two years. There are at least 60 well documented cases of Uruguayans disappearing during this period. Most were abducted in front of witnesses and some are known to have been arrested by Argentinian police or armed forces.

The whereabouts of most of the missing Uruguayans is unknown but some have recently been seen in Argentinian *pozos* (secret detention and torture centers). Others have appeared in Uruguayan prisons. Relatives presenting writs of *habeas corpus* have usually received the official reply that the person was not in detention or had been released.

One former prisoner, who had been held in a *pozo*, has identified a number of his fellow prisoners as Uruguayans. According to this witness, some of the *pozos* contain torture rooms in which prisoners are subjected to severe maltreatment for periods of up to 20 days. The Uruguayans were interrogated about their activities in their native country, and, in some cases, tortured by members of the Uruguayan Armed Forces. All reports state that the Uruguayans were in very poor health.

Among the disappeared people about whom AI is concerned are two small children. Simón Antonio RIQUELO was 20 days old when he was abducted with his mother Sara Rita MENDEZ Lampodio in Buenos Aires in July 1976. Three months later, Sara Méndez was discovered in official detention in Montevideo, Uruguay's capital. Nothing has been heard of Simon since his abduction.

The second disappeared child is a daughter born to Aída SANZ in unofficial detention in Argentina. Witnesses claim that the infant was taken away from her mother. There is no further information on her whereabouts.

Below is an incomplete list of Uruguayans who have disappeared in Argentina since December 1977:

Julio César D'ELIA PALLARES, Yolanda D'ELIA, Mario MARTINEZ, M. Antonia CASTRO DE MARTINEZ, Raúl BORELLI CATTANEO, Miguel Angel RIO CASAS, Ataliva CASTILLO, Gustavo ARCE, Raúl GAMBARO, Alfredo BOSCO MUNOZ, Gustavo GOICOCHEA and his wife, Alberto CORSCH, Elena Lerena DE CORSCH, Jubelino Carneiro DA FONTAURA, Carolina BARRIENTOS, Carlos Federico CABEZUDO, Celia GOMEZ ROSANO, Elsa Altuna FERNANDEZ, Eduardo O'NEIL VELAZQUEZ, Guillermo SOBRINO, Germán GARCIA CALCAGNO, Juan CARDOZO, Alfredo MOYANO and his wife, Aída SANZ and her baby daughter, the mother of Aída Sanz, Fernando DIAZ DE CARDENAS.

As some of these missing prisoners may have been returned to Uruguayan detention centers, courteous letters should be sent to the ministers of foreign affairs of Argentina and Uruguay, asking for information on the present whereabouts of these people, to:

Excelentísimo Sr Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Adolfo Folle Martínez, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores, 18 Julio 1205, Montevideo, Uruguay; and to: Excelentísimo Sr Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores, Vicealmirante Oscar Antonio Montes, Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores y Culto, Arenales 761, Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Copies of your letters should be sent to the Argentinian and Uruguayan embassies in your country.

POLICE OFFICIAL IN CHINA ACCUSED OF TORTURE

A police official in the People's Republic of China has been publicly accused of maltreating more than 470 prisoners.

A *Reuter* news agency report of 24 August, which quoted an official broadcast from the country's third largest city, Tientsin, stated that a leading Tientsin police official had been accused before a mass rally of "harassing" more than 470 people in "organs responsible for reforming criminals through labour" (prisons, labour camps or other penal establishments where prisoners carry out their sentences by "reform through labour"). The rally had been organized by the Tientsin Public Security Bureau (municipal police bureau).

Tientsin Radio said that the unnamed official had "mentally and physically tortured the victims so that a large number of persons were harassed, maimed or persecuted to death".

During the past year, the official Chinese press has publicized many cases of harassment or torture since the Cultural Revolution. Such maltreatment is prohibited under Chinese law—and has generally been officially attributed to alleged followers of the "gang of four"—the four party leaders purged in October 1976.

The recent denunciation of the Tientsin police official seems to be the first case where a precise reference to maltreatment in "labour-reform" institutions has been made publicly.

Rural Persecution in El Salvador

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Felipe Salinas was again detained and interrogated 11 days later, when he was cut on both arms, kicked and beaten, and his mouth filled with mud and urine. He was again discovered by local peasants after being left bound in an isolated area. His National Guard captors warned him that the next time he was detained he would be murdered.

Felipe de Jesús Chacón VASQUEZ and Serafín VASQUEZ: El Salitre, August 1977 Felipe de Jesús Chacón VASQUEZ and Serafín VASQUEZ were leaders of the conservative lay movement *Cursillistas de Cristiandad* and had held religious and literary classes in their own homes. They were arrested in the village of El Salitre on 26 August by some 60 uniformed members of the National Guard and the Hacienda (Rural) Police.

The body of Felipe de Jesús Chacón Vásquez was found the next day some two miles from the village. Eye witnesses said the body was almost unrecognizable: "They cut the scalp from his head and stripped the flesh from his face". The newspaper of the San Salvador Archbishopric stated that Serafín Vásquez "was taken to an empty house which he owned, and... vilely murdered with machetes".

The authorities subsequently announced that the men had in fact been killed by government troops but said that they were cattle thieves who had first attacked security forces. No official comment was made on the mutilation of the bodies.

Tránsito VASQUEZ: San Pedro Perulapan, March 1978

On the night of 20 March Tránsito Vasquez, a regional leader of the *Federación Campesina Cristiana de El Salvador* (FECCAS) was detained when a meeting of peasant farmers in the village of La Esperanza was attacked by some 30 members of the local government organization ORDEN.

His headless body was found the following morning, marked by torture. His head was hung from a tree branch as if looking down on the body.

During the following week at least 14 other FECCAS members were murdered by ORDEN members in the same area. Of 68 peasant farmers arrested—all members of peasant unions—22 remain unaccounted for, their whereabouts unknown.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Write a personal letter or postcard to: President Carlos Humberto Romero, Palacio Presidencial, San Salvador, El Salvador, Central America.

Respectfully request the government of El Salvador:

- To halt the persecution of peasant farmers and their labour and religious leaders;
- To abolish torture and arbitrary detention without trial;
- To publish the whereabouts of over 200 prisoners who have disappeared since 1976;
- To end immunity from lawful prosecution for members of the government organization (ORDEN) and security forces who commit torture and murder;
- To observe human rights guaranteed by international agreements to which El Salvador is bound by international law.