

## Worldwide Appeals August 2000 - Final Text

### Bangladesh - Government fails to protect rape victim

Rowshan Ara was raped in her home on 1 May 1999. She and her family and lawyers have since been intimidated and threatened by the five men involved and the authorities have done nothing to prevent this.

Rowshan Ara is a member of the Union Parishad (UP), a local council. She is popular with the poorer families, but has continually faced discrimination from within the UP because of her gender and poor background. Her determined efforts to stop misappropriation of funds by UP officials and to ensure they were used to alleviate poverty in the constituency were repeatedly blocked by male members of the UP. The five men were reportedly involved, with the connivance of the council chairman, in selling to private dealers healthcare supplies and wheat intended for the community .

The accused came to her house, in the Kishorgonj District of Dhaka, and pressed her to sign a piece of paper which she feared concerned her possible dismissal from the UP. When she refused they beat her in front of her 13-year-old daughter, Shara. Shara was then locked out of the house while two of the men raped her mother.

The five men were subsequently arrested, but three were released on bail. They have reportedly threatened Rowshan Ara, her children and lawyers. One of the prosecution witnesses has already refused to testify for fear of reprisal.

Please write, urging the authorities to take appropriate measures to stop the threats against Rowshan Ara, her lawyers, family and prosecution witnesses and to bring to justice those issuing such threats. Send appeals to: Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Dhaka, Bangladesh (fax: +880 2 811 3243).

### Peru - Attempt to kill journalist holding evidence of electoral irregularities

Fabián Salazar Olivares, a journalist, was tortured and almost killed after uncovering evidence of links between government intelligence services and members of the body overseeing Peru's presidential elections.

On 28 May, President Alberto Fujimori was re-elected amid national and international concerns that the election process was not transparent and had been marked by incidents of violence and intimidation of journalists. The elections were overseen by the Jurado Nacional de Elecciones (JNE), National Electoral Tribunal. On 24 May, Fabián Salazar was given material including videotapes apparently showing the President of the JNE going into the headquarters of the Servicio de Inteligencia Nacional (SIN), National Intelligence Service. The SIN has been accused throughout the electoral process of intimidating those who oppose President Fujimori. The tapes were also reported to show several journalists from the popular press and an opinion poll company executive in meetings with SIN officials.

Fabián Salazar arranged to hand over the material to the Organization of American States mission monitoring the elections. Shortly afterwards, four men burst into his office and demanded the tapes, documents and disks. They reportedly bound, gagged and blindfolded Fabián Salazar. When he refused to tell them where he had got the material, they beat him and began cutting his wrist with a saw. They set fire to his office, and tried to throw him out of the window. They were disturbed by security guards.

Please write, urging that all necessary steps be taken to protect Fabián Salazar Olivares and his family, and calling for an investigation into these allegations of torture and for those responsible to be brought

to justice. Send appeals to: Señor Alberto Bustamante Belaúnde, Primer Ministro, Palacio de Gobierno, Plaza Mayor, Lima 1, Peru (fax: + 511 447 1628).

#### Russian Federation (Chechnya) - Incommunicado detention of minor

Adam Abubakarov, a Chechen 16-year-old, is being held incommunicado by the Russian authorities, reportedly in the hospital of the pre-trial detention centre in Pyatigorsk. He has apparently been held in several secret “filtration camps”, where torture and ill-treatment have been routine and systematic.

Adam’s father told AI that in October 1999 he and his family had fled to Ingushetia from their home in the Chechen capital, Grozny, to escape the Russian bombardment. He said that in February 2000 his son had returned to Chechnya to help his grandparents dig up their vegetable garden to make an air-raid shelter underneath their home. On his way back to Ingushetia, Adam Abubakarov was detained by Russian forces at an army checkpoint in the Chechen town of Urus-Martan, apparently on suspicion of being a Chechen fighter. They had seen blisters on his hands and assumed them to be proof of handling weapons or digging trenches. He was then reportedly taken to a “filtration camp”, known as the “Internat” in Urus-Martan, and from there taken to other secret detention centres in the Russian Federation.

Please write, calling for the release of Adam Abubakarov if he is not to be charged with a re-cognizably criminal offence, and urging the authorities to grant him immediate access to his family, a lawyer of his choice and appropriate medical care. Send appeals to: President Vladimir Putin, Rossiyskaya Federatsiya, g. Moskva, Kreml, Prezidentu Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Russian Federation (fax: +7 095 206 6277).

#### Saudi Arabia - risk of unfair trial and execution

Siti Zainab, a 32-year-old Indonesian from Madura, Banjalkan, East Java, was arrested in September 1999 and accused of murdering her female employer. AI fears she may be sentenced to death and executed after a secret and sum-mary trial, as is usual practice in Saudi Arabia.

According to press reports Siti Zainab may have psychological problems. She is reported to have “confessed” to the murder after interrogation by the police. She has had no access to a lawyer. In November 1999 AI wrote to the Saudi Arabian Minister of Interior for details about her case, but has not received any response. Officials from the Indonesian embassy are believed to have been refused permission to visit her in Medina Prison.

At the time of writing, over 50 people have been executed in Saudi Arabia this year. Most, if not all, have been sentenced after trials about which little is known. Even the most basic rights, such as the right to be defended by a lawyer, are routinely denied. Defendants may also be convicted solely on the basis of confessions obtained under duress, torture or by deception.

Please write, asking for details of any trial proceedings against Siti Zainab and assurances that she is given access to a lawyer, consular officials and medical attention if necessary. Express concern that she may be at risk of execution and remind the authorities that execution of the mentally ill is prohibited under international standards. Send appeals to: His Excellency Dr ‘Abdullah bin Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al-Sheikh, Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, University Street, Riyadh 11137, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (fax: + 966 1 401 1741).