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MALI

Children tortured

SCHOOLCHILDREN under 12 were among detainees tortured or ill-treated by police in January in Bamako, Mali's capital city. Many are said to have been beaten, others left outside for long periods in the full heat of the sun and denied water.

Some 240 people, most of them young, were illegally held incommunicado for 10 days without charge or trial. In one case, men, women and children were reportedly held together in one large cell with no toilet or washing facilities and on a diet of bread and water.

Some were pro-democracy activists attacked by police with batons and tear-gas during a peaceful demonstration on 18 January. However, most were arrested on 21 and 22 January after rioting broke out in Bamako. Students protesting at the rumoured arrest of their leader were joined by young on-lookers. Cars, government buildings and officials' homes were attacked. At least five people were said to have been killed by the security forces. The unrest spread to other towns. In the southern town of Sikasso, on 28 January, Siaka Traoré, a school pupil, was reportedly shot by the security forces and crushed by an armoured vehicle. On 31 January the government ordered the release of 196 school children and said that 34 other people were to be charged with criminal offences; by late February they had still not been charged.

Several large and peaceful demonstrations in favour of multi-party democracy have taken place in recent months. On 18 January a new Minister of the Interior ordered two pro-democracy organizations and an independent student body to halt all political activity. He subsequently claimed only two people had been arrested. AI called on the government to investigate reports of torture and to take action to protect prisoners. □



Peaceful demonstrators try to stop a Soviet armoured vehicle in Vilnius, Lithuania, on 11 January 1991. Two days later 13 unarmed demonstrators were killed by Soviet troops. See page 8 *Associated Press*

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Dissidents tried in Beijing

THE latest and most public stage in the Chinese Government's suppression of the pro-democracy movement since June 1989, began in November 1990 with the trials of prominent activists.

At least 32 people detained since 1989 had been tried in Beijing by mid-February 1991. Fifteen, mostly student leaders and intellectuals, were sentenced to prison terms ranging from two to 13 years. Six others were "exempted from criminal punishment". By 12 February, the verdicts against at least 11 other defendants had not yet been announced. It is feared that they may have received harsh sentences, as they were charged with offences which in "serious" cases, are punishable by death.

Two of the most prominent dissidents were sentenced to 13 years' imprisonment. Chen Ziming, director of a private research institute in Beijing, and Wang Juntao, an economist and editor, were convicted of "plotting to overthrow the government" and "counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation" for their role in the 1989 protests. The official media claimed they were the "masterminds" of the protests. The New China News Agency announced

their sentences on 12 February, saying they had "shown no willingness to repent". Both are prisoners of conscience.

Another prisoner of conscience, veteran human rights activist Ren Wanding, was sentenced on 26 January to seven years' imprisonment for "counter-revolutionary

propaganda and agitation". Since 1988 he had made public appeals for human rights and democratic reforms, but he did not play a major role in the 1989 protests.

AI believes that the dissidents tried recently in Beijing and others convicted previously were denied fair trials. Trial proceedings in China fall far short of international standards and the practice of "deciding on the verdict before trial" is still common. In political cases, the chance of a fair hearing is even more remote than in ordinary criminal cases and the outcome is usually a foregone conclusion.

Hundreds of less prominent individuals have already been tried and jailed since 1989, but very few such trials were publicly reported by Chinese official sources. Some dissidents held in provincial cities have received long prison sentences for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of speech or association. Others may have been tried recently in Beijing and elsewhere without their cases being publicly acknowledged.

Official sources also announced in January 1991 the release of 69 dissidents. Only 15 of the 69 reportedly released were officially identified. □

AI visits India

AN AI delegation, including the Vice Chairperson of the IEC and the Secretary General, attended the World Congress on Human Rights in New Delhi in December. While in India, they met the Cabinet Secretary, Naresh Chandra, and Foreign Secretary Muchkund Dubey, who reaffirmed the previous government's assurance that AI could visit New Delhi for discussions with the government. AI was not given access to Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir or the north-east, but the delegation was told that, depending on the security situation in these areas, it might be allowed to do so in the future. AI's delegates also discussed the organization's work, including the protection of human rights in the context of armed conflict, with leading members of most political parties. □

CAMPAIGN FOR PRISONERS OF THE MONTH



Each of the people whose story is told below is a prisoner of conscience. Each has been arrested because of his or her religious or political beliefs, colour, sex, ethnic origin or language. None has used or advocated violence. Their continuing detention is a violation of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. International appeals can help to secure the release of these prisoners or to improve their detention conditions. In the interest of the prisoners, letters to the authorities should be worded carefully and courteously. You should stress that your concern for human rights is not in any way politically partisan. In no circumstances should communications be sent to the prisoner.

MYANMAR

Ma Theingee: a painter and art teacher in her early 40s, she was arrested on 20 July 1989 with many other leaders of the National League for Democracy (NLD).

Ma Theingee served as the personal secretary to NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi. They were both arrested in a mass crackdown on the opposition in Myanmar in July 1989. Aung San Suu Kyi has been held under house arrest since 20 July 1989.



Ma Theingee

Ma Theingee taught art at Yangon's (Rangoon) International School before her arrest. She has also written a book on the tradition of Burmese puppet theatre, which is awaiting publication in Bangkok, and has worked as a translator. She speaks English, French, Japanese and Burmese.

Although many NLD leaders were detained at the time, the party won over 80 per cent of the seats in the May 1990 national parliamentary elections. However, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), Myanmar's ruling military authorities, have not yet convened the National Assembly or said when they will do so. Hundreds of political activists remain in prison, held for their opposition to military rule. Four more NLD leaders were detained on 16 January 1991.

Ma Theingee was reportedly sentenced "for breach of existing laws", but AI has no further in-

PRISONER NEWS

AI learned in January 1991 of the release of 67 prisoners under adoption or investigation. AI took up 188 cases.

formation about the date of her sentencing or the exact nature of the charges against her. Nor is it clear when and before which court she was tried, though it seems likely that she may have appeared before one of the military tribunals established by the SLORC, whose procedures fall far short of international fair trial standards.

She is believed to be held in solitary confinement in the women's wing at Insein Prison near Yangon.

■ Please send courteous appeals for her immediate and unconditional release to: General Saw Maung/Chairman/State Law and Order Restoration Council/Yangon (Rangoon)/Union of Myanmar (Burma). □

KENYA

Kenneth Matiba: aged 58, a prominent Nairobi businessman and former government minister, he has been imprisoned without charge or trial since 4 July 1990 under Kenya's administrative detention laws, because of his support for a multi-party system in Kenya.

Kenneth Matiba was one of the most prominent of a number of businessmen, politicians, lawyers and church leaders campaigning in mid-1990 for the reintroduction of multi-party democracy in Kenya, a one-party state since 1982. President Daniel arap Moi suppressed widespread public debate on the issue of multi-party democracy but later proposed reforms to the ruling Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the electoral system.

On 6 June 1990 Kenneth Matiba and Charles Rubia, another former government minister, announced that they intended to hold a rally in Nairobi on 7 July. This was banned by the government

and on 4 July Kenneth Matiba, Charles Rubia and Raila Odinga (the son of the former Vice-President of Kenya, Oginga Odinga) were arrested and placed under administrative detention for an indefinite period without charge or trial. Others arrested with



Kenneth Matiba

them, including their lawyer, John Khaminwa, and two other prominent human rights lawyers, were later released.

Kenneth Matiba is held in permanent solitary confinement in Kamiti prison near Nairobi in a cell adjacent to a block used to house mentally-disturbed prisoners. Conditions are harsh, contact with his family is limited to infrequent, brief and supervised visits, and he has very little access to his legal representative. Kenneth Matiba suffers from high blood pressure but is denied medication and adequate medical attention.

■ Please send appeals for his release to: His Excellency President Daniel arap Moi/President of the Republic of Kenya/Office of the President/PO Box 30510/Nairobi/Kenya. □

CORRECTION: There was a mistake in the February 1991 Cuba Prisoner of the Month article. The names of the five men imprisoned with Esteban González González are Arturo Montané Ruiz, Manuel Pozo Montero, Mario Fernández Mora, Edgardo Llompart Martín and Manuel Regueiro Robaína.

GREECE

Leonidas Tsaousis: 21 years old, he is serving a four-year sentence in Avlona Military Prison for refusing to perform military service.

Leonidas Tsaousis is a Jehovah's Witness. His religious beliefs do not allow him to serve in the armed forces in any capacity. He therefore cannot accept the unarmed military service Greece offers conscientious objectors as an alternative to military service. Unlike most European countries with conscription, Greece does not provide a completely civilian alternative service for conscientious objectors and at any given time holds some 400 Jehovah's Witnesses in prison for their conscientious objection. Most of them receive four-year prison sentences, of which they usually serve three years. AI considers them to be prisoners of conscience.

Before his imprisonment Leonidas Tsaousis studied chemistry and intends to pursue a career in that field once he is released. His parents, who are workers living in Athens, visit him for two hours every Monday. He spends his days in prison reading the Bible and literature.

For many years AI has been urging successive Greek governments to release conscientious objectors and to introduce alternative civilian service of non-punitive length. In 1988 the Greek Government announced a draft law proposing a civilian service double the length of military service. It has not yet been debated by the Greek parliament.

Greece has failed to observe United Nations, Council of Europe and European Parliament resolutions and recommendations which call on member states to implement alternative civilian service of non-punitive length for conscientious objectors.

■ Please send courteous appeals for the immediate and unconditional release of Leonidas Tsaousis and the introduction of civilian service of non-punitive length for conscientious objectors to military service to: Prime Minister Constantine Mitsotakis/Office of the Prime Minister/Maximou Palace/Herodou Atticou Avenue/Athens/Greece. □



FOCUS

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Serious and wide-ranging human rights violations, including long-term imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, torture, unfair trials of political opponents, and "disappearances", have been committed in Morocco since the 1960s.

Supporters of legal opposition parties have frequently been tried and imprisoned for peacefully expressing their views. Some have been in prison for over 15 years. "Disappearances" of political opponents were recorded from the 1960s to the 1980s: many of them are still missing. Over 60 military officers, imprisoned after attempts on the life of King Hassan II, were taken in 1973 to a secret detention centre: at least 29 are said to have died as a result of inhuman conditions and the sentences of most of those still held have expired.

On 14 December 1990 a one-day general strike was called by two major trade unions in support of a number of economic and social demands, including a minimum wage and the right to strike. The unions asked their members to remain at home and not to demonstrate, but in some cities, such as Fes and Tanger, serious rioting broke out. Young people smashed cars and attacked shops and luxury hotels: the government said five people were killed but unofficial sources put the number of dead at between 50 and over 100. Hundreds were arrested: by mid-January 1991 over 500 people had been sentenced to prison terms of up to 15 years.

Gross violations of human rights continue. Prisoners of conscience and political prisoners are serving long sentences imposed after unfair trials. Incommunicado *garde à vue* detention is still prolonged. Torture is widespread.

These serious abuses violate international human rights treaties to which Morocco has committed itself. Despite repeated representations to the Moroccan authorities by human rights organizations including AI, and other international bodies, the government has yet to demonstrate its commitment to these ideals. The time for action is long overdue.



A demonstration in the early 1980s by families of political prisoners. Political prisoners do not receive fair trials in Morocco

State vengeance and repression in Morocco

In the 1970s demonstrations against government policies were met by police repression and widespread arrests. Hundreds of arrests among the armed forces followed attempted coups in 1971 and 1972: some of those subsequently sentenced to three years in prison remain in detention.

Further arrests took place of alleged members of opposition groups. Many critics and opponents of the government were brutally tortured before being given summary trials and sentenced to long terms of imprisonment.

Non-violent protests followed by violent reprisals continued in the 1980s. A general strike against price rises led to major confrontations between strikers, demonstrators and the security forces in June 1981. Hundreds of people were reported killed and around 2,000 arrested.

In early 1984 a huge wave of protest spread across most of Morocco, precipitated by the government's announcement of price rises and drastic cuts in education services. The protests start-

ed in secondary schools and led to strikes in both schools and colleges. Mass student demonstrations were supported by other social groups, particularly the unemployed.

Most of the demonstrations began peacefully but were met by large-scale police repression, arrests and shootings. Officially, 29 people died and 169 were wounded, but unofficial sources put the number of dead at more than 200 and alleged that several thousand were wounded.

Repression was particularly severe in northern towns where thousands of people, most of them students, were arrested. At the same time, the authorities rounded up those they regarded as political dissidents: many who had not even taken part in demonstrations were detained because of their past or suspected activities. Most were suspected of having left-wing sympathies, although several members of Islamic organizations were also detained.

Over 1,500 of those arrested were eventually brought to trial.

Many of the defendants alleged that they had been tortured while held in pre-trial detention in police stations or in secret detention centres such as *Derb Moulay Cherif* in Casablanca. Most of those tried received up to five years' imprisonment, often after unfair trials. At least 110 of those sentenced are still in prison.

In the waves of arrests and trials in the past 15 years, especially in 1981 and 1984, two groups of people, in particular, have been targeted by the authorities: members of Marxist organizations and, more recently, those belonging to radical Islamic groups. A third group singled out for repression are people of Western Saharan origin (Sahrawis), who were suspected of supporting the armed opposition, the *Popular Front for the Liberation of Segouia al-Hamra and Rio de Oro* (Polisario Front): AI believes that hundreds of Sahrawis have "disappeared". The Polisario Front and the government have been at war since Morocco annexed the Western Sahara in 1975.



The missing families

In some cases of "disappearance" the whole family is held responsible for the "crime" of one of its members. State vengeance seems to be the only motive.

One notable example of this involved the "disappearance" of eight members of the family of General Mohammed Oufkir, (left), a former minister of the interior and army chief of staff. He died in suspicious circumstances immediately after he reportedly led a coup attempt in 1972. Following his death, his widow and six children, together with a female cousin, "disappeared". Nothing was heard of them for 15 years. Then, in 1987, four of the children escaped from their secret, incommunicado detention. They managed to meet a French lawyer in the garden of a hotel, where they told him of the family's plight. But four days after their escape, they were rearrested.

Now, they are once again held without charge or trial together with the other members of their family at a farm near Marrakech. Only the parents of General Oufkir's wife and a military doctor are allowed to visit them.

In another case, 11 members of the family of Mohammed Lamine el-Leili, one of the first leaders of the Polisario Front, are said to have "disappeared".

The first to "disappear" was his sister, Fatma Ghalia, who was seized in a street in Tan Tan by four men in January 1976. Four weeks later, both his parents were arrested at their house in Tan Tan. A brother, Mohammed Fadel, a student, was arrested soon after in Kenitra. Other members of the family arrested include an uncle, Fadel Mohammed el-Leili, and his sister, Tagla. All remain "disappeared".

Many human rights violations have taken place within the context of the use and abuse of the Moroccan legal system. This remains the situation today. Vaguely worded laws on demonstrations and public assembly have been repeatedly invoked to imprison people involved in non-violent protests. In 1984, for example, they were used to sentence people allegedly involved in anti-government demonstrations; five years later, in 1989, students said to have been involved in protests at university campuses were jailed under such laws for periods ranging from four months to 10 years.

Other laws, regulating associations, the holding of meetings, the press, and membership of illegal organizations, have been used to imprison prisoners of conscience. Hundreds of people have been arrested and sent to prison under these provisions in the past 30 years, particularly members of left-wing groups opposed to the monarchy, and advocates of self-determination for the Western Sahara, such as members of *Ila' l-Amam*, Forward, an illegal Marxist group, and those allegedly belonging to Islamic associations such as *al-Jami'at al-Khayriyya*, the Charitable Association (also known as *al-'Adl w'al-Ihsan*, Justice and Charity).

Real or suspected opponents of the government have frequently been subjected to physical and psychological torture or ill-treatment, particularly while held incommunicado for long periods in pre-trial *garde à vue* detention.

Garde à vue detention allows the police to detain suspects for interrogation without referring their cases promptly to the judiciary and without giving detainees ac-

cess to lawyers and relatives. In practice, legal time limits on *garde à vue* are commonly exceeded in political cases: the police appear to be able to flout the requirements of the law with total or virtual impunity.

In addition, arrest dates are frequently falsified on official documents by police officers — most notably on the detainee's statement to the police (*procès-verbal*). Detainees are often forced to sign these statements, which can then be used as evidence in any subsequent trial. This is done apparently to conceal the length of time detainees have been held and, on occasion, to cover up the extent to which they may have been subjected to torture or coercion.

The fact that Moroccan law allows for an accused person to be sentenced to up to five years' imprisonment solely on the basis of an uncorroborated confession contained in a statement to the police appears actively to invite — perhaps even to incite — the security forces to torture or ill-treat detainees.

The most common methods they use include beatings with fists, whips or sticks; *falaqa* — beating on the soles of the feet with a stick, often while the victim is suspended; suspension in contorted positions tied to a pole — known as the "aeroplane" (*l'avion*, *al-tayyara*) and the "parrot" (*le perroquet*) or "chicken" (*al-farrukh*); being hanged from the ceiling by the wrists with just the toes touching the ground, or by the ankles upside-down; immersion of the head in buckets of water, urine or excrement; and the application of electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body.

In addition, detainees have repeatedly been kept manacled for long periods, subjected to threats against their own and their relatives' lives, and deprived of sleep. Members of the security forces appear to be able to commit such torture without any fear of administrative reprisals.

In some secret detention centres, such as Derb Moulay Cherif in Casablanca, political detainees are tortured and ill-treated

as a matter of routine.

Convicted political prisoners have also been beaten and ill-treated in various prisons throughout Morocco. Many have been confined in small, damp, windowless cells to the detriment of their health, and denied adequate medical treatment. Since the 1970s political prisoners have launched a series of hunger-strikes, sometimes unlimited and resulting in deaths, in protest at these inhuman conditions.

"Disappearances" in custody have been reported since the 1960s. Since 1975, several hundred people of Western Saharan origin are alleged to have "disappeared" following arrest.

There are more than 400 political prisoners, including many who are or may be prisoners of conscience.

In the past political prisoners have been released in amnesties granted by King Hassan II. AI has welcomed these initiatives, but they are not enough. All prisoners of conscience should be released immediately and unconditionally and major changes to Moroccan law and the practices of the security forces must be introduced to stop the widespread and gross violations of human rights which have persisted for so long in Morocco.

Unfair trials

During the trial of seven student activists in 1989 at Oujda, one of the defendants, Ahmed El-Azzouzi, took off his bloodstained shirt to show the court injuries to his back. He alleged that he had received these as a result of torture sustained in police detention.

The judge, however, refused to allow him to be examined by a



Trade unionists march through Casablanca to celebrate 1 May, Labour Day



A woman collapses with grief outside the house of a prisoner who died during a hunger-strike in 1984. Political prisoners have launched a series of hunger-strikes in protest at harsh conditions. Two prisoners have been on hunger-strike for over five years

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forensic doctor: ignoring the defendant's evidence, the judge said that the wounds could have been self-inflicted. After a summary trial, all seven students were convicted of participating in illegal demonstrations and jailed for 18 months.

Such reports of unfair trials have been received from Morocco for many years. Procedures observed during political trials have consistently contravened international standards for fair trial.

The laws under which political prisoners have been tried are so broadly framed that many have been convicted and sometimes given long jail sentences for nothing more than the non-violent expression of their political beliefs.

Hundreds of political trials have been held in Morocco in the past 30 years. At least 400 political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, remain in jail. Most of these trials have violated internationally accepted standards for fair trial. Many defendants were sentenced after unfair trials. Several were convicted solely on the basis of confessions extracted under torture while they were held incommunicado in *garde à vue* detention.

Rights of defence have been severely restricted, sometimes to the point where defence lawyers have withdrawn in protest. Defendants have been harassed and prevented from calling witnesses to testify to their innocence, and have been convicted solely on the basis of uncorroborated statements to the police, as is permitted under Moroccan law. Many such statements have been allegedly made under torture but the courts have consistently failed to investigate allegations of torture.

Many political trials have been conducted in a manner which mocks the principle of presumption of innocence guaranteed under Morocco's Criminal Procedure Code and belies any claims by the courts to judicial independence. The accused have often been treated so badly in court that there was no question of them receiving a fair hearing.

In one trial in Casablanca of 71 members of Islamic groups in mid-1984 the proceedings were marked from beginning to end by gross violations of human rights. When most of the defendants were arrested, no warrants were produced and no reasons were given to the victims or their relatives. Moreover, when some of those being sought by the police could not be found, relatives were detained in their place.

Many of the detainees were held in *garde à vue* detention for up to seven months in Derb Moulay Cherif, where they say they

were tortured. However, when they came to trial the court refused to order an investigation despite many allegations by the accused that they had been tortured and forced to sign what amounted to confessions while blindfolded and under threat. None had apparently been informed of the charges against them until they appeared before an examining magistrate, in some case months after their arrest.

No evidence was presented by the prosecution indicating that the accused, mostly members of the *Shabiba Islamiyya*, Islamic Youth, had used or advocated violence. Thirteen of the defendants were sentenced to death (seven *in absentia*) and 34 to life imprisonment.

In some cases such as those of the Islamists and of one journalist tried in 1990, defence lawyers walked out of the court when permission to call defence witnesses was refused by the judges.

Torture

Derb Moulay Cherif detention centre in Casablanca is well known to political detainees in Morocco. Here, torture and ill-treatment of prisoners takes place as a matter of routine, either to extract information or confessions, or as a means of intimidation.

A political detainee tried in February 1986 described what had happened to him in Derb Moulay Cherif:

"They started off with psychological torture — 'you will talk even if we have to kill you'. They slapped and kicked me all over while I was blindfold. Next day I experienced my first physical torture (the 'airplane') for about 30 minutes.

"Then I was questioned... That evening, they tried another torture (the 'parrot')... and they stifled me with rags and their hands until I nearly passed out."

Torture of political detainees has also been reported frequently in other detention centres, including Fes, Oujda, Tanger and Tetouan. A detainee in Oujda police station wrote in 1986:

"I was handcuffed and had my feet bound. I was blindfold and put in the 'parrot' position. Then they tortured me in three ways: giving me electric shocks on the sensitive parts of my body; with *falaga* and blows with a special hose pipe; and by being choked and having dirty water poured in my mouth and up my nose."

Several people have died in custody in circumstances suggesting that they had been tortured or ill-treated.

One such case involved Amine Tahani, a 29-year-old engineer and an official of the National Union of Engineers. He was ar-



Abdallah Zaaza (left) shows scars to his feet caused by torture in Derb Moulay Cherif detention centre in 1974



Mohammed Alaoui Suleimani

Prisoner of conscience

Mohammed Alaoui Suleimani, a primary school headmaster in Marrakech, has been arrested more than once for his religious views. He is 60 years old and has eight children.

In March 1990 he was sentenced by the Court of First Instance at Salé to two years' imprisonment and a fine of 10,000 dirhams. He was convicted on charges connected with an unauthorized Islamic association, Justice and Charity, founded by Abdessalam Yassine. The sentence was confirmed on appeal in 1990.

He was first arrested in 1972 after he helped to print an open letter from Abdessalam Yassine to King Hassan II. He "disappeared" for 18 months after his arrest. His description of his detention suggests that he was held in Derb Moulay Cherif. He was released, without trial, in Casablanca. He is now held in Salé Prison. □

Prisoner of conscience

Abdallah al-Harif is one of the longest-serving prisoners of conscience in Morocco. He was one of 178 defendants who were tried in 1977 for membership of an illegal organization and endangering the internal security of the state. Eight remain in prison.

In 1969, he completed his studies of metallurgy at the *Ecole des mines* in Paris, returned to Morocco and became a prominent civil engineer in Casablanca. From 1971 he was the Secretary General of the National Union of Engineers, and also an active member of Forward, an illegal Marxist-Leninist movement.

He was arrested in January 1975 and was held incommunicado for one year at the secret Derb Moulay Cherif detention centre in Casablanca, during which time he was severely tortured. At the trial, which took place in 1977, only after several hunger-strikes, Abdallah Al Harif was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.

He is serving his sentence at Kenitra Central Prison. In prison, he has been studying economics. □



Tanks patrolling the streets of Casablanca in June 1981 following a general strike against food price rises

rested in October 1985 and shortly after admitted to Averroes Hospital where he died. He had been an asthmatic since childhood and his death was said by the authorities to have been caused by an acute asthma attack.

However, according to other detainees held at Derb Moulay Cherif at the same time, when Amine Tahani was returned from an interrogation session, it was clear to them from his extreme state of distress that he had been tortured or ill-treated.

In response to inquiries by AI, the authorities made available some details of his medical condition in detention to support their finding that he had died from an asthma attack, but neither an autopsy nor a formal inquiry into the full circumstances preceding his death was carried out.

'Disappearances'

Hundreds of people have "disappeared" in custody in Morocco since the 1960s. Most of them "disappeared" before 1987, and the majority are of Western Saharan origin. However, at least 100 Moroccan nationals have allegedly "disappeared" in the past 30 years, including suspected political opponents of the government and the family of General Oufkir, a former minister.

Some of the "disappeared" have been released after years in incommunicado detention without trial or charge. Eight students and others who "disappeared" in 1976 and 1977 were held for eight years in secret detention centres in Casablanca before being freed.

Hundreds of people from the south of Morocco and the Western Sahara are believed to have "disappeared" between 1975, when the former Spanish Sahara was annexed, and 1987. They are thought to have been arrested by the security forces and held in secret jails.

Victims include the very old

and very young, although students and educated Sahrawis have been particularly targeted. Sometimes whole families have "disappeared". Protest against "disappearance" in the Western Sahara is muted for fear of similar treatment.

Nearly all Sahrawis held in prolonged detention without trial for political reasons have been denied normal legal processes. In all cases, reports suggest that the victims or their families were suspected by the authorities of supporting the Polisario Front.

Only one group of Sahrawis, the so-called "Meknes Group" of 26 people, mainly students, is known to have been brought be-



What you can do

AI is an international campaigning organization, which enrolls the support of ordinary women and men worldwide in its actions. Here are some suggestions about what you can do to try to stop further human rights violations in Morocco:

Write to the King

Send a letter to King Hassan II. Explain that you have read about the human rights violations taking place in Morocco, and urge him to institute measures to stop further abuses. Ask him to release all prisoners of conscience and to launch investigations into all cases of torture and "disappearance". Send your letter to: His Majesty King Hassan II/Palais Royal/Rabat/Morocco. □

fore a judge for alleged sympathies with the Polisario Front. They were convicted in 1980 of conspiracy to change the system of government and sentenced to up to five years' imprisonment.

Eighty-eight cases of "disappearances" have been taken up by AI groups and raised countless times with the Moroccan authorities: in response the authorities have simply denied any record of these prisoners.

Death penalty

Although no death sentences have been carried out since 1982, Ahmed Khiari has been facing execution for more than 18 years. He was condemned to death in 1972, at the age of 39, for assassinating Monadi Brahim, a police informer. He was an active member of the resistance against the French before independence and later joined the National Union of Popular Forces (UNFP).

He is not the only prisoner in Morocco who has suffered years of torment in expectation of death. Of the 147 prisoners on death row in Kenitra Central Prison, two have been there since the 1960s. Fifteen are held for political offences; some may be prisoners of conscience. Most were sentenced after unfair trials.

Under the Penal Code the death penalty is applicable for at least 30 crimes. It is currently retained as punishment for crimes including premeditated murder, murder in the course of other crimes, parricide, armed robbery, arson, and certain crimes against the internal and external security of the state and public order, including treason, damaging territorial unity in time of war, and taking up arms for, or inciting, civil war.

The death penalty is also provided for under the Code of Military Justice for crimes such as desertion to the enemy. It is mandatory for attempts on the life of the King. □

EGYPT

Gulf war opponents arrested

STUDENTS, journalists, medical doctors and lawyers were among some 20 people arrested in January and February, apparently for expressing their opposition to the Gulf war. Palestinians and Egyptians with Palestinian connections were also reportedly detained under state of emergency legislation in force since 1981.

Some have been charged with specific offences relating to the preparation of leaflets, or the dissemination of information held to be "hostile to the national interest". Others have been placed in administrative detention and held incommunicado by the State Security Intelligence Police.

AI called on the Egyptian Government to release all those held for the non-violent exercise of their human rights, and to ensure that all detainees were being humanely treated, in accordance with Egypt's obligations under international human rights treaties. □

DJIBOUTI

Torture reported after arrests

DOZENS of prisoners were reportedly tortured by Djibouti security police after over a hundred members of the Afar ethnic group were arrested in connection with an attack on a northern military barracks on 8 January. People demonstrating against the arrests were also detained but most were quickly released. Two soldiers were killed in later attacks for which no organization has yet claimed responsibility.

The government blamed Afar opponents for the attacks. Thirty-five prisoners, including Ali Aref Bourhan, a former Prime Minister, were subsequently charged with "undermining the security of the state" and murder, offences carrying the death penalty which are tried by a special security court with no right of appeal.

AI expressed concern to the government about the torture reports and called for an independent investigation. It urged that detainees be brought before a magistrate without delay and given access to legal representatives, doctors and relatives. □

CUBA

Human rights activists detained

DOZENS of government critics and human rights activists have been detained in Cuba in the past 18 months. Although many were released without charge shortly after arrest, others were held for months before being tried.

In cases that have attracted international attention, non-custodial sentences ranging from a few months to three years' "restricted liberty" have been imposed but the defendants were held for long periods in the Havana State Security headquarters without access to lawyers.

The Secretary-General of the Party for Human Rights in Cuba (PPDHC), Dr Samuel Martínez Lara, was sentenced to three years' "restricted liberty" for "rebellion" in February 1991 after being held for 11 months by State Security. He was denied access to a lawyer for eight months. Eight other members of the PPDHC, including former Secretary-General Tania Díaz Castro who has since renounced her human rights activities, were sentenced to between three months' and one year's "restricted liberty" in November 1990 for "illegal association". Students Jorge Quintana and Carlos Ortega received sentences of three years' and two years' "restricted liberty" in November 1990 after

being convicted of "disrespect" for openly criticizing President Fidel Castro.

Relatively heavy sentences have been imposed in less well-known cases on a number of people convicted of "enemy propaganda" whom AI believes may be prisoners of conscience.

Many were arrested outside the capital city and precise details of their cases have proved hard to obtain because of the virtual outlawing of human rights monitoring within the country.

Nine members of the Cuban Committee for Human Rights (CCPDH), in the Province of Villa Clara were convicted in September 1990 on charges of "enemy propaganda" and/or "illegal association", reportedly in connection with their activities on behalf of the committee. Their sentences ranged from one to six years' imprisonment. The CCPDH secretary from Ciego de Avila in Camaguey Province, Felipe Alexis Morejón Rodríguez, was sentenced to two years' imprisonment in June 1990 for "enemy propaganda". Juan Mayo Méndez, a mathematics teacher from Las Tunas Province arrested in January 1990, was sentenced to six years' imprisonment, allegedly for writing anti-government slogans. □



Dr Sari Nusseibeh

ISRAEL/OCCUPIED TERRITORIES

Prisoner of conscience detained

DR Sari Nusseibeh, a prominent Palestinian figure in the Israeli Occupied Territories, was administratively detained in January. The Israeli authorities have accused him of being a leading member of the Palestine Liberation Organization and of spying for Iraq.

Dr Nusseibeh stated he had "always been clearly and unequivocally opposed to all forms of violence", including war, and categorically denied having ever engaged in intelligence gathering. He said he believed he had been detained because of his public standing and his support for "achieving peace with Israel through recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people".

The judge who reviewed his detention order reduced his detention period from six to three months.

AI believes that Dr Nusseibeh is a prisoner of conscience, detained for his non-violent political opinions and activities as a leading Palestinian figure. It has called for his immediate and unconditional release.

Some 14,000 other Palestinians, including prisoners of conscience, have been administratively detained since December 1987. Detainees are virtually never given enough information to be able to defend themselves against the authorities' accusations. Those currently held include three other prominent Palestinians known for their public support for peaceful dialogue with Israel. □

Islamists arrested in Tunisia

OVER 500 members, sympathizers and suspected sympathizers of the unregistered Islamic movement *al-Nahda* have been detained in Tunisia since September 1990. Many of them were released without charge after having been held incommunicado, often beyond the 10-day maximum period allowed in Tunisian law. Others have been sentenced to up to two years' imprisonment for offences such as encouraging and participating in unauthorized demonstrations, belonging to an unauthorized organization and spreading false information.

There have been numerous reports of torture and ill-treatment in incommunicado detention. Monji Jouini, an independent candidate in the 1989 legislative elections, was arrested on 19 December 1990, held incommunicado for 43 days, and released without charge on 30 January 1991. Abdellatif Tlili, detained without trial for 18 months between 1987 and 1989, was arrested again on 21 November 1990, held incommunicado for 42 days, and

released without charge on 1 January 1991. Both allege that they were tortured during incommunicado detention, including by suspension in the *poulet rôti* position (suspended on a bar with the hands tied behind the knees), sexual abuse and beating.

Hamadi Jebali, editor of the weekly *al-Fajr*, the newspaper of the Islamic movement *al-Nahda*, was sentenced by military court on 31 January 1990 to one year in prison for publishing an article calling for the abolition of military courts in Tunisia. AI has adopted him as a prisoner of conscience. The writer of the article, lawyer Mohammed Nouri, was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and granted bail pending appeal. Both men were charged with defamation of a judicial institution.

The Tunisian Government has denied the torture allegations raised by AI. The organization, however, remains concerned at the increasingly numerous reports of torture and prolonged incommunicado detention. □

USSR

AI calls for inquiry into killings in Vilnius

AI has called for a full and impartial investigation into reports that 13 peaceful, unarmed demonstrators were killed by Soviet troops in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius on 13 January 1991.

The killings occurred after a large crowd had gathered outside the city's television tower that evening to prevent Soviet troops taking over the building.

Eye-witnesses say the demonstrators offered only passive resistance when tanks and soldiers used tear-gas and live ammunition to disperse them.

The Lithuanian authorities list 14 people dead, including one Soviet soldier, and over 160 injured as a result of the operation. Of the dead, one is said to have died from injuries inflicted by explosives and three others were crushed by armoured vehicles. The remaining demonstrators and the soldier died of gunshot wounds.

According to the USSR Minister of Interior Affairs, members of the crowd fired on the soldiers first. President Mikhail Gorbachov announced on 22 January that there would be an investigation into these and other recent deaths in the Baltic republics: six people died of gunshot wounds in Latvia after incidents involving troops on 16 and 20 January.

AI has urged the authorities to ensure that law enforcement officials are aware of, and conform to, international standards regarding the use of force. □



Schoolchildren taking part in a painting competition organized by an AI group in India on 10 December 1990, International Human Rights Day. The theme of the competition was "Human rights in a changing world"

CAMEROON

Journalists convicted under new laws

TWO well-known Cameroonian journalists were convicted in January of publishing an article criticizing the government. Pius Njawe, editor of *Le Messager*, a Douala newspaper, and economist Célestin Monga, author of the article, were charged with showing contempt for the head of state, the courts and members of the National Assembly. Amid country-wide protests against their prosecution, they were convicted on 17 January 1991 of showing contempt for the National Assembly and given suspended prison sentences and fined.

They were convicted under one of several new repressive laws adopted in December 1990. In

amendments to the penal code the maximum penalty for showing contempt for the courts or National Assembly members was increased from one to five years' imprisonment, and three new political offences were introduced, all punishable by long prison sentences. These involved spreading false information and incitement to revolt and rebellion.

The government has presented these new laws as reforms which herald a new era of multi-party democracy and political freedom. However, in reality, old repressive laws appear simply to have been replaced with new ones. Broad powers of administrative detention without charge or trial

are still retained and a state of emergency may still be imposed by presidential decree without control by the legislature or the judiciary.

There are no safeguards against abuse of emergency powers or against arbitrary and unjust detention. Political trials will no longer be heard by special military tribunals but by another special court, the State Security Court. As before, its members will be appointed by the government and it will allow no right of appeal to a higher, independent court. Press censorship has been tightened, and new laws allowing political parties and activities also place restrictions on both. □

GUATEMALA

Mother and baby 'disappear'

MARÍA Tiu Tojín and her one-month-old daughter María Josefa "disappeared" after being detained in August 1990 by the Guatemalan army in El Quiché department, along with a community of 85 peasants, including women and children. The peasants had fled their villages during earlier army counter-insurgency campaigns and did not wish to return to areas under army control; the army customarily accuses such displaced people of collaborating with the guerrillas.

According to witnesses from the group, the military authorities repeatedly accused María Tiu Tojín of being a guerrilla and sub-

jected her to prolonged interrogation. She and her baby were then taken to a military base; the peasants to a displaced persons' centre. Soldiers reportedly told María Tiu's family that she and her baby were detained at the base, but when family members went to search for them there, their detention was denied. It is also reported that after the two "disappeared", soldiers in the area had a baby in their possession. However, there has been no further word of the two, and relatives and witnesses to their arrest who have attempted to locate them have received threats from local military authorities. □

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