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TURKEY

Mixed outlook for legal reforms

THE Anti-Terror Law passed by the Turkish parliament on 11 April commuted all existing death sentences and brought the release of prisoners of conscience held under the notorious penal code articles 141, 142 and 163, which were at last repealed.

In a letter to the Prime Minister Yildirim Akbulut, AI welcomed these moves, but expressed grave concern about other provisions of the law which put in question the authorities' will to bring to justice those responsible for torture: alleged torturers will be tried before State Security Courts, whose prosecution service supervised the interrogation from which the torture allegations arose. Moreover, unless the victim actually died in custody, the alleged torturers cannot be tried without the permission of the Interior Minister.

The organization is also concerned that police officers involved in the interrogation of prisoners charged with "terrorist" offences cannot be called into court, making it difficult to challenge the validity of confessions or other statements extracted under torture.

Although tens of thousands of political and criminal prisoners have been conditionally released under the terms of the new law, approximately 2,500 political prisoners, many of whom were sentenced after unfair trials following the 1980 military coup, continue to serve prison sentences of up to 20 years.

AI is recommending that the new provisions relating to the investigation and prosecution of alleged torturers be amended. It also has urged the government to reform or repeal a provision in the new law which would impose a prison term for "making separatist propaganda", even when this contains no advocacy of violence. □

RELEASED

Jack Mapanje, a Prisoner of the Month in February 1988, has been released. See page 2.

First AI visit to North Korea

FOR the first time ever, an AI delegation visited the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). It attended the 85th Inter-Parliamentary Conference in Pyongyang from 29 April to 4 May and also held discussions with legal scholars and government representatives.

Officials of the Supreme People's Assembly and scholars from the Law Faculty of Kim Il Sung University answered the AI delegation's questions on the country's legal system, including the Constitution, criminal procedures, the 1987 Criminal Code and the 1990 Civil Code. Published texts of these codes, which had previously been unobtainable, were given to the delegation.

Academics at the University of National Economy explained various social laws and the system of appeals and petitions against administrative decisions. Aspects of the application of the laws were discussed with a Central Court

judge, a member of the Central Lawyers Association and officials of the Ministry of Public Security. The delegates also attended a criminal trial and visited a public security (police) station where they discussed detention and interrogation procedures and inspected cells.

Professors at the Academy of *Juche* Science, officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and others said that the country's state ideology protects human rights, particularly social and economic rights.

Legal scholars stated that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ratified by the DPRK in 1981, was considered an integral part of the country's law. They said that the 1987 Criminal Code had reduced the penalties for a number of offences. The new code provides for two basic punishments: the death penalty and "re-education through labour" for up to 15 years. AI's delegates were told that the death

penalty is imposed rarely and mainly for espionage or sabotage, although they were not given detailed statistics.

Several officials criticized the *Amnesty International Report 1990* which referred to reports that tens of thousands of political prisoners were held at 12 corrective labour camps.

A public security official responsible for "re-education" facilities told the AI delegation that there are about one thousand people in three such camps nationwide. He would not say how many were held for "anti-state" crimes but indicated that all were "outsiders" arrested in connection with the state of war on the Korean peninsula and that these prisoners were held separately from ordinary criminals.

The same official denied knowledge of reports that about 40 staff and students at colleges in Pyongyang had been arrested in 1988 for putting up political posters. □

TOGO

Discovery of 26 bodies leads to investigation of disputed killings

SHORTLY after anti-government demonstrations in Togo's capital, Lome, in mid-April, the bodies of 26 people believed to have been killed by members of the security forces were discovered in a nearby lagoon.

Most had been beaten to death and one had last been seen in the custody of soldiers. This led to allegations that members of the security forces were responsible for the killings and had tried to hide the bodies. Faced with both national and international protests, the government initially denied that soldiers were responsible and blamed ordinary criminals for the killings. It then announced that a commission of inquiry was to investigate the killings.

On 5 April, a week before the discovery of the 26 bodies,



The body of a suspected victim of a security force killing is dragged from a lagoon, where 25 more bodies were discovered

Adadoh Kossi and Adjoh Comlan Tintin had been shot dead by soldiers when they tried to topple a statue of President Gnassingbe Eyadema.

In recent months there have been large demonstrations by pro-

democracy supporters calling for the President to resign. Since October 1990 several such demonstrations have ended in violence and killings after the security forces attacked initially peaceful demonstrators. □

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.

SAUDI ARABIA

Sheikh Samir 'Ali al-Ribeh: *a religious scholar in his late twenties, he was arrested in October 1990 and is currently detained without trial in al-Mabahith al-'Amma (General Intelligence) Prison in Dammam in the Eastern Province.*

Sheikh Samir 'Ali al-Ribeh was arrested at Riyadh airport on his return from Damascus with his wife and two daughters, who were released shortly afterwards. He is suspected of being a sympathizer of the banned *Munadhamat al-Thawra al-Islamiyya fil Jazira al-'Arabiyya*, the Organization of Islamic Revolution in the Arabian Peninsula (OIRAP).

Founded in 1975, the OIRAP is the principal organized Shi'a opposition group in Saudi Arabia. It

Samir 'Ali al-Ribeh is being detained solely for the non-violent expression of his political beliefs. The organization has expressed its concern about his case to the Saudi Arabian authorities, but has received no reply.

■ Please send courteous appeals for his immediate and unconditional release to: The Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines/King Fahd bin 'Abd al-'Aziz/Office of the Custodian of the Two Holy Shrines/Riyadh/Saudi Arabia. □



Sheikh Samir 'Ali al-Ribeh

has defined its purpose to be primarily that of "educating and enlightening the masses". There is no evidence in its publications of calls to violence or armed action. It has stated that the Shi'a in Saudi Arabia are discriminated against and has urged that they be granted equal rights. Since 1979 hundreds of alleged members or sympathizers of the OIRAP have been detained for prolonged periods without charge or trial.

AI is concerned that Sheikh

RELEASED

Cuba: AI has learned that Edgardo Llompart Martin and Mario Fernandez Mora, who were included in a February 1991 *Prisoner of the Month* article, have been released. Elizardo Sanchez Santa Cruz, Prisoner of the Month in January 1990, has also been released.

VIET NAM

To Thuy Yen: *a writer and poet in his fifties, he was arrested on 13 November 1990 at his home in Ho Chi Minh City, and charged with writing anti-government poetry and making contact with foreign groups deemed "hostile" by the government.*

To Thuy Yen was first arrested in October 1975. He spent five years in a "re-education" camp until 1980 when he was sentenced to 11 years' hard labour in prison. He was released in 1985.

At the time of his arrest in 1990 the police reportedly confiscated anti-government poems and writings, correspondence with foreign "hostile" groups, receipts showing that he had received money from such groups, and tapes of his poetry set to music.

His most recent arrest occurred during a crackdown on government critics which began in May and June 1990 and still continues. Among others arrested around this time were academic Doan Viet Hoat and journalist Le Van Tien.

AI believes that To Thuy Yen was arrested for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of opinion and expression. He is currently being detained in a prison in Ho Chi Minh City. To AI's knowledge his case has not been brought to trial. His wife is reportedly allowed to bring food to the prison for him, but not to visit him. Little is known about the conditions of his detention.

■ Please send courteous letters appealing for his immediate and unconditional release to: Dó Muoi/Chairperson of the Council of Ministers/Hoi Dong Bo Truong/Ha Noi/Socialist Republic of Viet Nam. □

KENYA

Raila Odinga: *aged 48, a businessman, scientist and son of prominent government critic Oginga Odinga — Vice-President of Kenya from 1964 to 1966 — he was arrested in Nairobi on 5 July 1990. He was immediately detained under Public Security Regulations providing for the indefinite administrative detention, without charge or trial, of anyone held to be endangering the security of the state.*

Raila Odinga has been a prisoner of conscience before, having spent almost seven of the previous eight years in detention. Arrested with him in July were former government ministers Kenneth Matiba, also still detained, and Charles Rubia, who was released in April 1991. They were among businessmen, politicians, lawyers and church leaders calling for multi-party democracy in Kenya, a one-party state since 1982. Raila Odinga had not spoken publicly on political issues but, as in the past, seems to have been arrested because the authorities wished to silence his father, who subsequently announced the formation of a new opposition party, the National Democratic Party, in February 1991. The government has refused to register this party and Oginga Odinga was himself briefly arrested on 7 May.

Raila Odinga is held in permanent solitary confinement in Naivasha maximum security prison 80 kilometres from Nairobi. He is married with three children, but has had only about six short supervised visits from his wife during almost a year's detention.



Raila Odinga

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

Corrections: May 1991 *Focus:* Stanza Bopape "disappeared" in 1988 not 1990. June 1991 *Focus:* Abdallah Oufkir was reportedly released in February 1991, not 1990.

Prisoner of conscience released

JACK Mapanje, the internationally renowned poet and a prisoner of conscience in Malawi since 25 September 1987, was released on 10 May after nearly four years in detention without charge or trial.

Under Malawi's Public Security Regulations, the official reason for his detention was never disclosed, but it is widely believed that the increasingly political themes of his poetry had incurred the disapproval of the authorities.

Other prisoners of conscience, including the veteran political leader Orton Chirwa and his wife, Vera Chirwa, a lawyer, remain in prison serving life sentences imposed after a grossly unfair trial in 1983. AI is continuing to urge their immediate and unconditional release. □



FOCUS

amnesty
international

A worldwide campaign



Maris-Stella Mabitje, a former political detainee in South Africa, meets Swedish AI members who worked on her behalf

© Anders Kullersund

'Your letter strengthened me'

When AI first wrote to the parents of Maris-Stella Mabitje, imprisoned under South Africa's emergency laws in 1987, they didn't respond. Maris-Stella wrote back in 1988, after a year in prison.

"I am sorry for the fact that we took such a long time before responding to the letter. The problem is that my parents did not have any idea of who you are and what AI is all about. As a result they were suspicious of the whole business and did not know what to do." The same letter talked about how AI's support helped her at a time when her health was deteriorating.

"I am happy to know

that even at trying times such as these there are friends such as you who think of me, my family and are even concerned about the general welfare of all of us behind bars. Your letter strengthened me, I knew that through your help, your prayers, your attempts at urging the authorities to stop being insensitive and act as humanly and reasonably as possible in dealing with all their political opponents, one day we are going to be released and once more be given the opportunity of leading normal lives ... Now I feel that I am not alone at these hard and troubled times. I now feel wanted and I have all the

courage to hope on and carry forward with all I am doing."

Soon after receiving this letter, AI learned that Maris-Stella had been transferred to another prison because of her deteriorating health. In March 1989 she was released with restrictions. She had continued to write to AI from prison, and kept doing so after her release.

"... good news, I am free now though not free in the true sense of the word. All I can say is that they released me with restrictions. I am expected to report at the police station daily and not to be out of the yard from six o'clock in the evening until five

o'clock in the morning... Well half a loaf is better than no bread. At least I am able to be with my family though I must admit that this is an outside prison... We are still experiencing harassment." Maris-Stella was one of many political detainees who were supporters of the United Democratic Front, a coalition of organizations which, until its disbandment in 1991, was engaged in non-violent opposition to the government's *apartheid* policies. A year after her release, her restrictions were lifted and AI arranged for her and a fellow prisoner to visit Germany, Sweden and Norway to talk about their experiences. □



'You continuously tried to help'

"With that universal love which transcends race and frontier, you continuously tried to rescue and help me during years of imprisonment. Because of your care and love, not only do you have my gratitude, you have caused me to experience that side of humanity characterized by warmth and hope...Eleven years ago, the Taiwanese people, even privately, were not bold enough to receive former political prisoners. Now, though, they

dare hold warm welcome parties — openly and publicly. There are many reasons for this change, but the painstaking efforts and influence of Amnesty International may be one of the most important factors."

Taiwan, 1987, prisoner of conscience Huang Hua. Imprisoned for the fourth time in December 1990 for peaceful political activity when he was 52 years old, he has spent a total of more than 21 years in prison.

torture of all prisoners and campaigns for the end to the death penalty.

But very often, there is not simply one victim of abuse but

hundreds or thousands of them. When individual cases add up to a human rights crisis in a country, AI highlights that country to generate increased international pressure.

The sheer volume of appeals from this global network is a pressure in itself. The President's Office in Colombia is said to have recently received 20,000 letters within a week. And one West African head of state actually complained to an AI delegation that a deluge of letters would arrive as soon as the authorities detained someone for questioning.

Sometimes, AI's work will result in releases or in better treatment. Two Turkish journalists who were tortured in detention in April 1990 said they were treated somewhat better after an urgent appeal had been launched on their behalf. AI's appeals may not always result directly in a prisoner's release, but governments receiving thousands of letters from around the world know that their actions will not go unnoticed. When one Turkish man with a long history of being detained and tortured

The site was Chile's National Stadium in Santiago — a place which had been turned into the country's largest detention centre virtually overnight after the 1973 military coup.

Thousands of men and women had been rounded up and held inside — many were tortured, killed or taken away never to be seen again.

That was nearly 20 years ago. In October 1990 the stadium was again packed with thousands of people — but this time, 150,000 who had come to support a concert for human rights held by AI, the worldwide human rights movement.

The concert was a breakthrough for AI's Chilean membership which, 10 years ago, consisted of only two members forced to meet on a park bench because no one would rent them an office. But

the membership and campaigning work in Chile expanded and became increasingly diverse over the years as AI tackled more human rights issues and spread its membership to some 70 countries.

Today, over one million AI members, subscribers and donors around the world from all political, religious, racial and age groups are committed to stopping human rights abuses wherever they occur, united by the belief that individual women and men can take effective action.

Campaigning for individuals who are jailed, tortured, "disappeared" or sentenced to death is central to AI's work. The organization works for the release of prisoners of conscience — people detained for peacefully expressing their views — fair trials for political prisoners, opposes the

'I suffered a lot in prison'

In his first two weeks of freedom, Maina wa Kinyatti of Kenya wrote directly to an AI group in Sweden to give them the news of his release.

"This is to inform you that after six years, four months, 17 days in prison, I am now free. I walked out of the prison gate on Monday 17 October 1988 with my shoulders unbent, with my head unbowed. I feel great to be free again, to walk in the sunshine of freedom. For the first time since 1982 I can touch the green leaves of the trees, I can smell the sweet scent of the flowers; I can share smiles and laughter with the women and children, but I am bitter because those six years of my imprisonment were the best years of my life, the best years of my intellectual development and they were taken away."

Kinyatti was imprisoned in Kenya for expressing his op-



position to the government.

"Allow me to say this: until my dying day I shall never accept a scheme of things in which men and women are imprisoned for their political beliefs, for their writings." Despite the campaigning of AI and other groups, he had to complete a long sentence, much of it spent in solitary confinement.

"I suffered a lot in prison, but I remained strong throughout because I drew my strength and courage from you, from many other international friends. Your collective support and concern kept me going during those days of my imprisonment, during those long days of hunger, boredom and loneliness in solitary confinement. In fact without your support, concern and love, I would not have survived the prison brutality and barbarity."

Like many former prisoners of conscience, Maina also appreciated the letters he received from individual members of AI, and the help they gave him and his wife.

"Please thank those beautiful people in Sweden whose love, concern and understanding sustained me during my imprisonment. I shall always remember them." □



'Our execution was a possibility'

"The continuous pressure which you and other human rights organizations brought to bear upon the Kabul government ultimately resulted in my release...Without such a pressure even our execution at the hands of the Khad was a possibility...In my own case your efforts and support greatly encouraged me and my family, for when I came to know of them I was indeed strengthened by them. I feel strong because it became the proof of the rightness of

the cause for which I struggled by lawful means."

Afghanistan, 1988, university lecturer Hasan Kaker. A former prisoner of conscience, he was arrested in March 1982 with others apparently for expressing disquiet among students and staff at the increasing number of Russian teachers on campus and earlier widespread arrests of students.

He was released in 1987 and is now in exile in the United States of America. □

was arrested in October 1990 but released the following day, police station officials apparently said. "Oh you're a favourite of Amnesty's, aren't you", as they released him.

AI's work and contact with victims and families can also help overcome their sense of despair and solitude and make them stronger and more determined not to give up.

As part of its campaign work, AI frequently asks for support from doctors, lawyers, trade unionists, and other groups in the community with special interests, skills or influence. There are extensive networks of AI medical and legal groups and a growing number of trade unionists, teachers and journalists who work on behalf of individual prisoners and in general campaigns. These groups may sometimes intervene on behalf of colleagues who are themselves victims of human rights abuses.

In 1989 two Sudanese doctors were arrested and tried for calling a meeting to discuss a doctors' strike at a hospital. Medical groups began an im-

mediate international campaign to publicize their cases and a day before a delegation of scientific and medical organizations was due to arrive in Sudan, the doctors were released.

AI also organizes campaigns or actions about the general human rights situation in a particular country to publicize and combat large-scale human rights violations.

In China the fate of many of the prisoners arrested since the 1989 pro-democracy protests still remains veiled in secrecy. In 1990, as part of a worldwide campaign, AI published the names and details of 700 of the thousands arrested — at that time, the longest list of prisoners in China ever compiled by a human rights organization.

And last year AI launched a campaign on Brazil which drew worldwide attention. Members lobbied embassies, wrote letters and generated publicity in their own countries which resulted in a pledge by the Brazilian President that "we cannot and will not again be a country cited as violent

in reports by Amnesty International".

It is this sort of high profile initiative that makes headlines. But the constant, persistent work of AI members around the world still focuses on bringing pressure to bear on behalf of individual victims.

AI members in Japan wrote thousands of letters to the South African authorities about a prisoner of conscience who had gone on hunger-strike in early 1987. No one in the prison could read Japanese so the authorities translated thousands of letters only to discover that they all said "release Dean Farisani". The Reverend Tshenuweni Simon Farisani was released some months later.

In Norway, children from around the country responded to a children's radio show which featured the case of a nine-year-old Ethiopian boy

"From what we gathered, the impact was absolute panic. We were passed from person to person and they didn't hang up for a long time", one group member said.

The prisoner, a teacher jailed for owning a printing press and accused of distributing subversive literature, was released a few months later.

And in Scotland, the plight of several imprisoned artists was highlighted by a campaign which coincided with Glasgow's year as the cultural city of Europe. Giant banners featuring the artists' work were made for a launch event in the city's main square and over 40,000 signatures were collected.

Human rights emergencies can occur anywhere and at any time and AI has to be prepared to act quickly when it learns that someone is at risk of torture, execution or other human

Today, over one million AI members around the world are committed to stopping human rights abuses

born in prison who had spent his entire life there with his mother. Children sent drawings, cards and letters to the AI office in Oslo and a huge parcel was forwarded to the Ethiopian President with a letter asking for their release. Five weeks later both the boy and his mother were freed.

One Australian group in Hobart decided several years ago to try to speak to the prisoner of conscience in Uruguay on whose behalf they were working after all their letters went unheeded. Undeterred by their inability to speak Spanish, they arranged a telephone hook-up through a translation service in Melbourne 600 kilometres away and telephoned the prison.

rights violations.

When this happens, an Urgent Action network with about 50,000 members in over 60 countries can be mobilized within 48 hours to write, telex or fax immediate appeals to the authorities. One night-watchman in Ireland writes to every government or authority listed on every Urgent Action — an average of 2,000 letters a year. In France, a network of common-law prisoners who write from their own prisons has developed.

AI's unique worldwide campaigning also extends to the abolition of the death penalty.

In the United Kingdom, as part of a nationwide campaign in 1990 to stop the re-introduction of the death

penalty for certain crimes, members draped a huge banner over a bridge in London which called on people to "Say no to hanging — Phone your Member of Parliament now".

A comprehensive report on the death penalty was published in 1989 as part of an international campaign for abolition. Petitions were organized and AI members in several countries arranged forums where the mother of a murder victim spoke against executions.

Making the public, and not just governments, aware of human rights is an important part of AI's work and is carried out by members all around the world.

When AI visited Sierre

Leone several years ago, its delegation was stopped at five police roadblocks but managed to recruit two new members from among the officers on the way — all the police who stopped the delegation knew of AI.

That in itself shows a significant amount of public awareness which could only have been achieved through the work of members in the country.

In India, more than 5,000 people ran a "race for human rights" in December 1990 carrying banners which proclaimed that "torture is inhuman" to raise public awareness of human rights. A group in Madras went from village to village explaining the Universal Declaration of Human

'The kids never believed they had rights'

"I carry the voice of the street children of Guatemala to thank AI on their behalf for all that you have been doing to help them — the kids never ever believed they had rights. These kids have been exploited by everybody...so when they see something in writing and they see photographs of their friends, they start to think 'Hey, someone cares about us'. When I first wrote to Amnesty, I didn't know who to write to... it was only AI that responded...nobody has given a damn about the kids before and now they realise that people are starting to care...that they as human beings have just as much right to be on this planet as we all do...Things are really moving. Everyone at the highest levels of government are talking about street children — AI has



moved mountains." Guatemala, 1991. Bruce Harris, executive director for Latin America of Covenant House, which works for street children in Guatemala, presents a plaque to AI on their behalf.

Rights and collected 15,000 signatures supporting the Declaration.

In an attempt to raise awareness of human rights issues among the army and police in Israel and Brazil, AI members have given lectures on human rights to new recruits. Dutch members have held similar

courses for police, business people and Foreign Ministry officials.

Sometimes a visual campaign is most effective, especially in countries where the adult literacy rate is low. In India, one group uses street theatre to present human rights issues to rural communities. The Lahore group in Pakistan also produces plays on human rights themes which tour shanty towns and rural areas. And in Kuwait, AI members organized an exhibition of paintings on the theme of human rights, political repression and free expression.

The strength and success of AI's work is due to its members, who include students, the elderly, tradespeople and professionals.

When governments receive appeals from AI — not just from one country or one group of people but from all around the world — it becomes much harder to dismiss them.

Not every AI campaign or action is going to result in prisoners being freed or detainees being treated better. But at the very least, the organization's continuing campaigns, appeals and publicity remind governments that whatever human rights violations they attempt will be exposed to the harsh glare of international scrutiny. And that's what saves lives. □

'Thanks for keeping my memory alive'

"My nightmare experience is gradually retreating into the past. Please accept my most profound thanks for keeping my memory alive for almost 17 years and for all you continue to do for me."

This message ends Vladimir Balakhonov's letter to AI in May 1989. He had been imprisoned for 17 years from 1973 and enjoyed four months of freedom before being rearrested in 1985 for "anti-Soviet slander". Balakhonov spent another three years in a strict-regime corrective labour camp in Yakutsk before being released in May 1988 after completing his sentence.

"I am writing to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your immense and unceasing efforts over so many years to save my life and free me from imprisonment. No one can tell what would have happened without them.

"I am deeply grateful to you for the humanity, kindness and devotion you have



shown towards me...someone who happened to find himself in a situation so desperate that, to an outsider, it must appear more than flesh and blood can bear.

"I am particularly appreciative of the fact that you persisted in your action, irrespective of whether your efforts would culminate in any practical result whatsoever...simply because you were unable to act

in any other way. But please be assured that, although — with one exception — your mail did not reach me, I sensed your efforts, care and attention, and this did help me to remain alive and unbroken, despite my uncertainty...or, rather, almost total ignorance...of what was going on beyond the impenetrable barrier of walls and barbed wire surrounding the hell of the gulag."

A year after his release, and having served his whole sentence, Vladimir emigrated to Switzerland, where he was met by local AI members.

"I would also like to express my gratitude for the warm and deeply touching reception I was given at Geneva Airport on 8 April when I finally arrived to resume my life in the Free World... it was a demonstration of the initial stand you had taken so long ago, the noble ideal of protecting someone persecuted for his convictions." □

IRAQ

In the aftermath of the uprising

AI delegations visited Iran and Turkey in May to interview Kurdish, Assyrian, Turcoman and Arab Shi'a refugees about human rights violations committed in Iraq during the March uprising of the Kurds in the north and the Shi'as in the south.

These violations included widespread arrests, torture, and summary and mass extrajudicial executions. Delegates also sought to interview those who had escaped from Iraqi prisons during the uprising, and families of prisoners or the "disappeared", in order to gather information about human rights violations in Iraq over the past decade.

AI had written to the Iraqi Government in April, expressing concern at reports of human rights violations committed against unarmed civilian Iraqi Kurds and Shi'as in the aftermath of the uprising. The Iraqi Government replied in late April, disputing the accuracy of allegations made by AI. Also in April, AI wrote to the Governments of Iran, Kuwait, Syria and Turkey, asking them to allow refugees into their countries and not to send them back to Iraq. AI appealed to the international community to assist these countries in the protection of Iraqi refugees. □

Torture and other abuses persist in Honduras

IN a document published in June AI called on the Government of Honduras to urgently implement measures to protect human rights. The report, *Honduras: persistence of human rights violations*, notes that torture and ill-treatment are still being used during the interrogation of political and criminal suspects. Beatings, the use of the *capucha*, a rubber hood or sheet placed over the face to provoke near-suffocation, and suspension by the wrists were among the methods described.

"They put the *capucha* on my head three times causing asphyxiation and I fainted each time. Then they took it off and one of the policemen pushed down with his foot on my knees causing great pain...I begged them for mercy...shouting at them in despair that I was mother and father to five children..." said a 34-year-old woman detained for five days in February 1991.

A number of people have reportedly been killed by police or military personnel in circumstances suggesting they were extrajudicially executed. There were

ALBANIA

More than 500 political prisoners freed

MORE than 500 political prisoners, many of them prisoners of conscience, were released in Albania during the first three months of this year. On the eve of multi-party elections on 31 March, the authorities claimed that no more political prisoners were being held. However, a local human rights organization said in May that it believed there were about 40 remaining political prisoners convicted of offences such as "espionage" and "treason". Among those still detained after the elections was prisoner of conscience Edmond Pojani who was arrested in July 1990 and sentenced to two years' imprisonment for "slandering the supreme organs of the State and Party" after he had criticised Enver Hoxha, Albania's former ruler

NIGER

Tuareg prisoners acquitted

AT a trial before Niger's State Security Court in April, 44 members of the Tuareg minority ethnic group were acquitted and released after a year or more in custody. Many appeared to be prisoners of conscience detained on account of their ethnic origin. Some of the defendants had been accused of attacking government targets in the town of Tchind

who died in 1985. To AI's knowledge he was still in Bardhor prison camp near Kavajë in May.

After opposition allegations of a cover-up in the investigation of the deaths of four people on 2 April during anti-communist demonstrations in Shkodër, a cross-parliamentary commission was established on 17 April to reinvestigate. The commission found that the security forces were responsible for the deaths; seven people were subsequently arrested, including Shkodër's chief of police. Parliament vetoed the commission's recommendation to dismiss the Interior Minister, but approved the dismissal of the head of the Investigator's Office and the Procurator General.

At the end of April Osman Kazazi, a political prisoner for 38

years until his release in 1989, announced in Tirana that an association of former political prisoners and internees was to be created.

In May President Alia issued a decree establishing a commission to deal with the rehabilitation (including housing and employment) of wrongly sentenced political prisoners or people administratively interned (punished with internal exile). The decree also established the right of the Supreme Court, the Procurator General or the Minister of Justice to issue "certificates of innocence" to those who had been unjustly sentenced. Many former political prisoners have alleged that they were convicted (sometimes repeatedly) on the basis of false evidence obtained under duress from the accused and witnesses. □

RWANDA

Thousands of untried detainees released

AT least 3,500 people detained without trial in connection with an armed attack on Rwanda by Uganda-based Rwandese exiles in October 1990 were released by the government in late March and early April.

In all, about 7,000 were arrested in connection with the rebel attack. At least 3,000 of them, all untried detainees, were said by the authorities to have been released between October 1990 and February 1991.

About 50 people arrested in connection with the rebel attack remain in prison. They include 12 people sentenced to prison terms and eight sentenced to death by the State Security Court in January and February after unfair trials. Several dozen others are awaiting trial.

Most of those released were members of the minority Tutsi ethnic group who appeared to have been detained because of their ethnic origin or family relationships with members of the rebel group known as the Rwandese Patriotic Front (FPR) rather than because of any involvement in the fighting.

Others were members of the majority Hutu ethnic group suspected of supporting the FPR because they had criticized the authorities or government policies before the rebel attack. Nearly 300 of those freed were Ugandans who appeared to have been detained on account of their nationality. □

at least three political killings in 1990 attributed to clandestine groups linked to the armed forces or operating with their acquiescence. These groups were also alleged to be responsible for a pattern of harassment and intimidation directed at members of trade unions and other non-governmental organizations.

AI called on the Government of President Callejas to take steps to protect detainees from torture and to ensure that the perpetrators of human rights violations are brought to justice. The organization said that the authorities have

CAMEROON

Amnesty for political prisoners

AT the end of March President Paul Biya ordered the release of some 80 political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, and reduced the sentences of some 20 others. Most had been held for seven years, some without charge or trial, in connection with a coup attempt in 1984.

Demands for democratic reforms and the release of remain-

ing political prisoners continued, however, and demonstrations throughout Cameroon resulted in several deaths. On 22 April the National Assembly granted an amnesty leading to the release of all political prisoners. The authorities also promised early multi-party elections but rejected demands for a national political conference. □

Tabaraden in May 1990, but most had been arrested some time before the attack took place. The trial lasted three days and was attended by several thousand people. An AI observer attended the trial. The court did not examine the allegations of torture made by the defendants, nor have they been adequately investigated by the Niger authorities. □

persistently failed to fully investigate human rights abuses, in spite of pledges to do so. □

Stop Press: The Honduras Government has said it will investigate and punish "with the full force of the law" those responsible for killing five peasants in Agua Caliente on 3 May 1991. They were shot dead when military and civilian personnel reportedly attacked a community involved in a land dispute. AI has called for the findings of the investigation to be made public as soon as possible.

UNITED KINGDOM

Unfair trials, ill-treatment and disputed killings

ON 11 June AI published *United Kingdom: Human rights concerns*. The document outlines long-standing concerns about human rights abuses in the United Kingdom, including the ill-treatment of detainees, unfair trials, killings by security forces in disputed circumstances in Northern Ireland, and the detention of non-British nationals on national security grounds.

Since 1980 hundreds of detainees in Northern Ireland have alleged that they were ill-treated in police custody. Existing procedures and safeguards continue to be inadequate to prevent such ill-treatment. In some trials confessions have been excluded on the basis of allegations of ill-treatment; in civil proceedings former detainees have been

awarded compensation for their treatment. However, very few criminal or disciplinary proceedings have been initiated as a result of such cases against the police officers involved. Similar complaints have been made in Great Britain.

In May a former appeal court judge said: "Police standards of behaviour will never improve as long as officers think that those responsible for discipline look the other way when there are accusations of malpractice. The successful prosecution and imprisonment of police officers who are proved to have perverted the course of justice may encourage others not to do likewise."

AI has been concerned about fair trial issues, particularly in cases where detainees were denied

legal advice and uncorroborated contested confessions provided the basis for convictions. On several occasions the prosecution service and the police have deliberately withheld crucial evidence from defence lawyers.

Serious allegations about police and army behaviour, particularly in regard to disputed killings, have not been promptly and impartially investigated. Instead there have been internal inquiries and secret reports. A consequence is the frequent allegation that information is suppressed and that the unlawful actions of agents of the state have been deliberately concealed. These issues of concern are of such gravity as to seriously undermine confidence in human rights safeguards in the United Kingdom. □

CHINA

Repression continues

TWO years after the suppression of peaceful pro-democracy protests, which resulted in the massacre of hundreds of civilians in Beijing on 4 June 1989, human rights violations continue to be widespread in China.

Thousands of political prisoners, including prisoners of conscience, remain imprisoned. Some have been sentenced after unfair trials. Others are held without charge or trial under administrative regulations. Thousands of summary executions were carried out during an anti-crime campaign which has continued in 1991. There have been no changes to the laws under which such human rights violations are perpetrated and no attempt to introduce fundamental safeguards.

AI described its concerns in two documents published in June*. One includes a list of over 300 pro-democracy activists and other political prisoners who have been imprisoned since June 1989. For example, Chen Lantao, a prisoner of conscience, was sentenced to 18 years in jail for joining the 1989 protests. The documents also describe AI's concern about unfair trial procedures.

Religious leaders and Tibetan independence activists have also been caught in the sweeping repression. Thousands of Tibetan nationalists have been detained without trial for months at a time since 1987 and at least 200 are still held in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital.

Criminal prisoners have been executed by firing squads in extremely large numbers. During 1990 AI recorded more than 960 death sentences and 750 executions although the organization believes the actual number is in the thousands. □

**Violations of human rights in China - A summary of AI's concerns in 1991 and China - Trials and Punishments since 1989*

AI visits Ghana

TWO AI delegates visited Ghana in April at the invitation of the Ghanaian authorities to discuss the case of Major Courage Quarshigah and six others accused of conspiring to overthrow the government and held without charge or trial since September 1989 and January 1990. Other issues raised with the government included the long-term administrative detention of at least 50 political prisoners and the continuing use of the death penalty. □

PERU

Local officials "disappear"

FOUR people from the district of Chuschi, Cangallo province, Ayacucho department "disappeared" after their detention on the night of 14 March. According to reports, some 25 hooded soldiers from the Pampa Cangallo military barracks had entered a peasant community in Chuschi and detained Manuel Pacotaype Chaupín, the Mayor of the district, Martín Cayllahua Galindo and Marcelo Cabana Tucno, Secretary and Under-secretary of the Council, and Isaías Huamán Vilca. Relatives went to the Pampa Cangallo military base to ask where the four were being held, but army authorities denied any knowledge of their detention.

On 26 March further inquiries were made at the Pampa Cangal-

lo base by a nine-member delegation from Cangallo which included the Mayor, the Public Ministry's Attorney and Secretary, and four police officers. The delegates were reportedly threatened by soldiers at the base. On 25 April the Mayor of Cangallo, Feliciano Huamán Quispe, was shot and seriously injured by unidentified assailants. The other members of the delegation are also at risk; human rights defenders have been increasingly targeted over recent years and have suffered arbitrary arrests, death threats, "disappearances" or extrajudicial execution.

AI has called on the government to clarify the legal situation of the four "disappeared" men and to guarantee the safety of those investigating the case. □

SYRIA

Eighty released while thousands remain in untried detention

AI welcomed the release on 28 April of 80 political prisoners, including more than 50 prisoners of conscience, who were freed from untried detention in Syria by the Government of President Hafez al-Assad. Reports indicate that all those released had been suspected of membership in the prohibited Party for Communist Action (PCA) or the Communist Party Political Bureau (CPPB).

In a message to the government AI expressed concern, however, about thousands of other suspected opponents of the government, including hundreds of prisoners of conscience, who continue to be detained under state of emergency legislation, in force in Syria since 1963.

Most political prisoners are held without charge or trial, including some who have been held for more than 20 years. Some were tortured during interrogation and held incommunicado for long periods, others remain in prison although sentences imposed by the courts have expired.

Over 700 Palestinians are also reported to have been released from Syrian prisons since 12 March. Hundreds more, including suspected members or supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and other Palestinian groups, continue to be detained, most without charge or trial. Some have been held since in 1983. □

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