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BRAZIL

Street children activist threatened

WOLMER do Nascimento, Rio de Janeiro coordinator of Brazil's National Street Children's Movement, went into hiding and sent his family to stay at an undisclosed location after he and his two young children repeatedly received written and oral death threats in early November.

In late November he received Federal Police protection on orders from the Justice Minister.

Wolmer do Nascimento founded a refuge for street children in Duque de Caxias, one of Rio's most violent suburbs. Recently he has denounced the role of police, judges, businessmen and politicians in supporting death squads. He says that these "extermination groups" killed 184 children in the area during the first five months of 1989.

Local and state authorities have apparently been slow to investigate or prosecute suspected death squad members. Although President Collor called in September for full investigation of all killings of children, human rights groups in Brazil said little progress had been made by the end of 1990.

Despite receiving police protection, Wolmer do Nascimento continued to stay away from Duque de Caxias and the refuge there. Frightened by news of the threats to Wolmer do Nascimento and his children, some of the street children who had frequented the refuge abandoned it.

As a result of an urgent action appeal, Wolmer do Nascimento reports that more than 1,000 letters from AI members expressing concern about his safety arrived at his Rio office. □

TURKEY

Torture and killing in the southeast

THERE have recently been large-scale detentions throughout southeast Turkey where government troops are carrying out counter-insurgency operations against guerrillas of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK). The PKK have been carrying out armed attacks in the region since 1984.

The security forces have evacuated dozens of villages along the Syrian border, in an attempt to deprive the guerrillas of shelter and food. Villagers with no history of political activity have been interrogated, often under torture, usually on suspicion of having provided shelter for guerrillas.

On 8 September almost the entire population of Çizmeli village, near Siirt, was taken into custody. While most were released within a short time, Abit Ekinci remained in incommunicado detention in Eruh Gendarmerie Headquarters for 20 days. "My hands were bound, my clothes were removed and I was suspended from the ceiling by my arms", he said. "I was beaten constantly, and subjected to *falaka* (beating on the soles of the feet). I was given electric shocks three times. My testicles were bound with string and squeezed. My hands and neck were burned with

cigarettes. The soles of my feet were slit with a razor and salt rubbed in. They forced me to sign a statement." Abit Ekinci was charged with sheltering Kurdish guerrillas and committed to Diyarbakir Prison.

A similar operation was conducted in the village of Yeniköy near Mardin following a clash between security forces and guerrillas in mid-November. Twenty-two villagers were detained; several of them later reported that they had been tortured at Mardin Police Headquarters. Of nine

people charged and committed to prison, it is reported that one has serious leg injuries and another has broken teeth.

On 25 November the body of 24-year-old Yakup Aktaş from Derik, a small town in the Mardin area, was returned to his family by the Mardin Gendarmerie who had detained him a week earlier. The autopsy report stated that he had died of a heart attack. However, those who washed the body stated that there were wounds which suggested that he may have died under torture. His family's request for a second autopsy was refused and his body was buried under military supervision.

On 28 September the village of Kayadeler was occupied by troops and members of anti-guerrilla "special teams". They entered the mosque where the men were gathered, and told all of them to go home except for the imam, Ibrahim Döner. Shots were heard and two hours later his body was presented to his brother together with a pistol and a suicide note.

AI appealed to the Turkish Government to initiate investigations into all these incidents, but had not received a response by the end of December. □



Ibrahim Döner

CHAD

New government promises reforms

THE Government of President Hissein Habré fell on 30 November 1990 when rebel forces led by Idriss Déby occupied the capital, N'Djamena, without bloodshed and Hissein Habré fled to Cameroon. The new government, in which Idriss Déby became President, promised to introduce multi-party democracy and to protect human rights. One of the last acts of Hissein Habré's Presidential Guards, which AI had previously identified as responsible for gross human rights violations, was to extrajudicially execute over

300 political opponents secretly detained at the presidential palace.

Several hundred other prisoners who had been detained at secret detention centres in N'Djamena were released on 1 December. Many had been tortured. Other prisoners were found in secret detention at a residence of the former Minister of the Interior.

Released prisoners confirmed reports published by AI in March 1990 of a pattern of systematic torture and ill-treatment of political prisoners, in which former President Habré was allegedly

directly involved. More than 400 political prisoners from the Hadjerai and Zaghawa communities, arrested in May 1987 and April 1988, were either killed in secret or died in detention as a result of torture, malnutrition, lack of hygiene and medical attention.

AI urged the new government to introduce safeguards to prevent killings of prisoners and to establish an inquiry into the fate of hundreds of political prisoners who "disappeared" in the period since 1982 while President Habré was in power. □

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.

IRAN

Malakeh Mohammadi: a journalist and editor aged in her 70s, she was among hundreds of people arrested in April 1983 because of their political activities on behalf of the left-wing Tudeh Party, then a legal organization.

Malakeh Mohammadi and other leaders of the Tudeh Party were accused of plotting against the Islamic Republic of Iran; many were tortured to force them to confess to espionage and other offences and some were subsequently executed. Some of those who survived, including Malakeh Mohammadi's husband, Mohammed Pourhomozan, were among thousands of political prisoners secretly executed in the latter part of 1988.

Malakeh Mohammadi remained in detention for three and a half years before she was finally tried in 1986. She was not allowed to present any defence and has never been informed of the precise charges against her. She was sentenced to death, but this was later commuted to 20 years' imprisonment. She is alleged to have been tortured during the seven and a half years she has now been held.

Malakeh Mohammadi is held at Evin Prison, together with other women prisoners of conscience, arrested in 1983, from the Tudeh Party and other left-wing groups. All have suffered continuous pressure to renounce their conscientiously-held political beliefs. In August 1990 some accepted offers of temporary release, although nearly all are now said to be back in prison. Malakeh Mohammadi is reported to have declined the offer, as she had no close relatives left alive and had decided to leave prison only when the authorities granted her a full, unconditional release.

■ Please send courteous appeals for her immediate release to: His Excellency Hojatolislam Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani/President of the Islamic Republic of Iran/The Presidency/Palestine Avenue, Azerbaijan Intersection/Tehran/Islamic Republic of Iran. □

RWANDA

Innocent Ndayambaje: a 29-year-old economics student at the National University of Rwanda, he was arrested in October 1986 and held incommunicado without charge for three years.

In March 1990 Innocent Ndayambaje was tried and sentenced by the State Security Court to five years' imprisonment for contravening Rwanda's one-party Constitution.

Under the constitution all Rwandese are obliged to be members of the ruling National Revolutionary Movement for Development (MRND), and the establishment or membership of other parties is a criminal offence.

At his trial Innocent Ndayambaje pleaded not guilty to the charge of contravening the constitution, but admitted to being the sole member of the National Resistance Front (FRONAR) which, he said, aimed to end regional and ethnic injustices in Rwanda. He is a member of Rwanda's minority Tutsi ethnic group.

He was sentenced to five years' imprisonment for his membership of FRONAR and for dis-

tributing political tracts in the town of Butare.

AI is concerned that Innocent Ndayambaje did not receive a fair trial: he had no access to legal counsel either before or during his trial and no general right of appeal against his conviction and sentence.

The court's five judges are appointed by Presidential decree and included two soldiers and an official from the President's office; none of them is known to have legal training.

He remains held at Kigali Central Prison. He is apparently not allowed to communicate with his relatives nor to receive visits.

■ Please send courteous letters appealing for his immediate release to: Son Excellence Monsieur le Général-Major Habyarimana Juvénal/Président de la République/Présidence de la République/BP 15, Kigali/République Rwandaise. □

CUBA

Esteban González González and six others: members of the unofficial *Movimiento Integracionista Democrática (MID)*, Movement for Democratic Integration, they were arrested in Havana in September 1989. In January 1990 they were convicted of "rebellion".

Esteban González González, a 60-year-old mathematics teacher, founded the MID in early 1989. The movement explicitly rejects any violent activity and advocates a wide range of democratic reforms, including the establishment of a pluralistic government, thus challenging the monopoly of the Communist Party, the only legal party in Cuba.

After their arrest, the seven men were held in State Security headquarters for several months without access to legal counsel.

For at least the first month they were reportedly held in small cells with constant artificial light and were allowed no fresh air or exercise.

They were transferred to prison in December 1989 but are believed to have had access to legal counsel only in May 1990 when the prosecution presented the results of its investigations to the court. The seven were accused of possessing and disseminating "counter-revolutionary propaganda"; seeking funds and recognition from international sources; planning a campaign of civil disobedience; and wanting to change the political and social system and to restore capitalism. Esteban González was sentenced to seven years' imprisonment; Arturo Montané Ruiz, Manuel Mora, Edgardo Llompert Martín and Manuel Regueiro Robaina

received sentences ranging from three to six years' imprisonment and Isidro Ledesma Quijano was given three years' "restricted liberty", rather than imprisonment, on grounds of ill-health. The imprisoned men are serving their sentences in Combinado del Este Prison.

■ Please send courteous letters appealing for the release of the six imprisoned men to: His Excellency Dr Fidel Castro Ruz/President of the Republic/Ciudad de la Habana/Cuba. □

RELEASED

AI has learned that **Ladji Traoré**, prisoner of the month in October 1990, was released in November 1990 without charge or trial.

PRISONER NEWS

AI learned in November 1990 of the release of 43 prisoners under adoption or investigation. AI took up 150 cases.

Stop press

The following reports are now available from AI:

Colombia: AI is concerned about human rights violations against members of indigenous communities in Caldas department in central Colombia and the apparent lack of progress in the official investigations into these abuses.

(Index No. AMR 23/61/90)

Sierra Leone: AI has received reports that 12 people were sentenced to death in Sierra Leone earlier this year after being convicted of murder and armed robbery. Although death sentences have not been carried out in recent years in non-political cases, AI is concerned that the execution of six men for treason in 1989 may herald a return to the use of the death penalty.

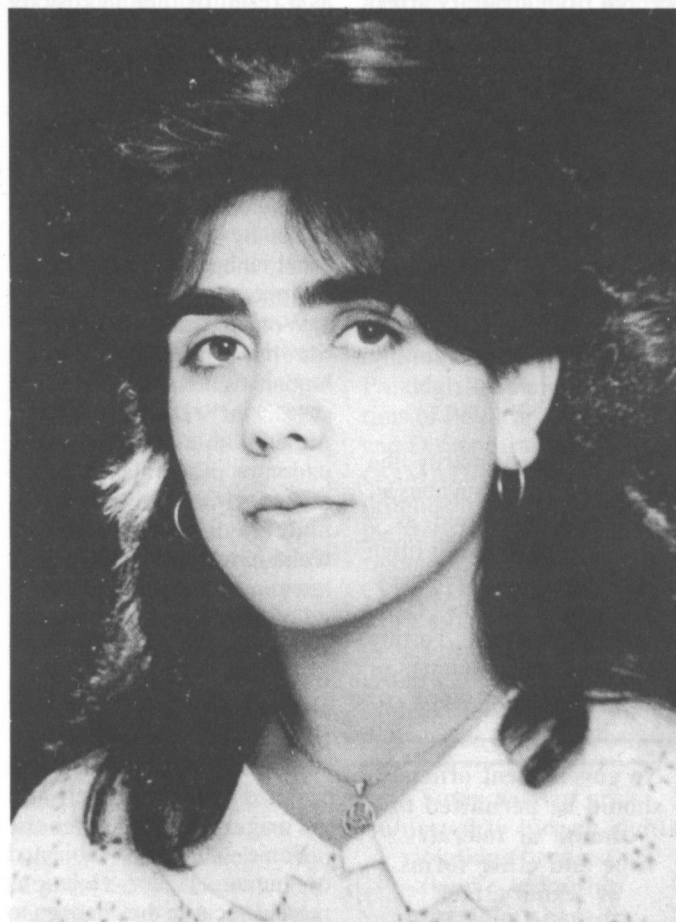
(Index No. AFR 51/01/90)



FOCUS

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Women in the front line



AI has received numerous reports of women being tortured while in police custody in Turkey.

Nevruz Türkdogan was treasurer of the Women's Association for Democracy in Turkey. While distributing a journal in Ankara on 15 September 1990, she and her husband were detained by police.

Despite informing the police that she was two and a half months pregnant, Nevruz Türkdogan testifies that she was repeatedly beaten for three days. She miscarried on 19 September. She was then taken to Ankara Numune Hospital. On 20 September she was unconditionally released by Ankara State Security Court.

Please send courteous letters urging an impartial and independent investigation into allegations of torture and ill-treatment of Nevruz Türkdogan, insisting that those responsible be brought to justice. Send appeals to: Abdülkadir Aksu/Minister of Interior/Içişleri Bakanlığı/06644 Ankara/Turkey □

a comprehensive account of all human rights violations against women, merely an indication of the type of atrocities women have suffered and therefore what must be prevented from happening to anyone in the future. Nor is this a survey of all violations of women's human rights. It covers only those human rights violations which fall within AI's strictly defined mandate: to seek the release of prisoners of conscience — men and women detained solely for their beliefs, colour,

sex, ethnic origin, language or religion, who have neither used nor advocated violence; to work for prompt and fair trials for all political prisoners and to oppose the death penalty, extrajudicial executions and torture without reservation. AI covers a limited spectrum of rights, but not because it ignores the importance of other rights. It believes that there is a close relationship between all human rights but recognizes that it can achieve more by working within set limits.

A pregnant woman detainee is punched in the stomach by police officers. An elderly woman is raped in front of her family by armed soldiers. A young girl is detained and sexually humiliated by government officials. A wife is tortured by interrogators to force her husband to "confess". A mother is shot dead by soldiers simply because her son is suspected of political activities. A daughter is threatened with death by government agents because she asks after her "disappeared" father.

The list of such gross human rights violations against women is endless. Many are targeted because they are strong — because they are political activists, community organizers, or persist in demanding that their rights or those of their relatives are respected. Others are targeted because they are seen as vulnerable — young women who can easily be sexually abused or humiliated, frightened mothers who will

do anything to protect their children, or pregnant women fearful for their unborn babies, women who can be used to get at men, or refugee women, isolated and vulnerable in unfamiliar surroundings.

This report details human rights violations which are primarily suffered by women as well as a range of human rights abuses that women have experienced alongside men and children. By focusing on human rights violations committed against women, AI hopes to mobilize international support for the protection of women and, by extension, for all members of the societies in which they live.

This report records the experiences of women who have survived human rights violations. It also tells the stories of many who did not survive. The violations have occurred, and continue to occur, in every region of the world and under every system of government.

These pages do not contain

Women's human rights, like those of men and children, are proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — the individual freedoms basic to human life. These include freedom of conscience, expression and association, freedom from arbitrary arrest and detention, freedom from torture, the right to a fair trial, and freedom from extrajudicial killing. These rights have been trampled on by governments around the world. Whatever the circumstances, however deep the economic, social or political crisis a government may face, there can never be a valid excuse for contravening fundamental human rights.

Women are primarily the victims of certain abuses. Rape, frequently used as a form of torture, is most often inflicted on women detainees. The United Nations (UN) Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or

No government official should be permitted to commit or tolerate rape and other forms of sexual attack

Punishment prohibits "any act by which severe pain or suffering, whether physical or mental, is intentionally inflicted" for purposes such as obtaining information or punishing, intimidating, or coercing a person. No government official should be permitted to commit or tolerate rape and other forms of sexual attack.

Women are particularly vulnerable to rape between the time of arrest and arrival at official detention centres. In some countries law enforcement officials or military personnel have committed rape and other sexual abuses without having officially arrested the victim. However, confinement in an official place of detention does not necessarily protect women from rape or other sexual abuses. Many have reported that prison guards have raped them, attempted to rape them, or threatened them with rape.

For women who are preg-

nant at the time of detention, additional suffering often accompanies human rights abuses. They risk injury to the foetus, miscarriage and the prospect of giving birth in harsh prison conditions. The women who become pregnant as a result of rape in custody face yet a further set of traumas.

Women also suffer from sexual humiliation, threats of rape and verbal abuses intended to degrade them. All of these violate their basic human rights by subjecting them to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Women from all walks of life have been targeted for human rights abuse. In some cases, the reasons are connected with a woman's occupation or peaceful, legitimate activities. Governments detain or direct violent attacks against women who are physicians, lawyers, journalists, trade unionists, teachers, human rights activists, political activists, community organizers and members of many other professions. In other cases, women's human rights are violated because of their ethnic origin or religious beliefs.

Some women are subjected to human rights violations merely because they happen to be the wives, mothers, daughters or friends of people whom the authorities consider to be "dangerous" or "undesirable". These women are threatened, held as substitutes for their relatives, tortured or even killed as governments attempt to exert their will over those closely connected in some way with the women.

The leading human rights activists in many societies are prisoners' relatives: often wives and children, endlessly in the front line, campaigning for the prisoner's release, confronting government officials, trying to get information, trying to care for the prisoner. Prisoners' families bear the burden of providing assistance of all sorts — from daily meals, medicine and clothing, through to raising funds to pay legal fees, ransoms, or to publicize the case.

In many African countries a strong tradition of family or community solidarity has protected prisoners in vulnerable



Embarca ment Taleb ould Husein, a radio announcer in Laayoune in the Western Sahara, was taken from her home by plainclothes police officers in September 1979 and has not been seen since. She left behind a 13-year-old daughter.

She is one of hundreds of people who have "disappeared" in the south of Morocco and the Western Sahara, many of whom were arrested because they or their relatives were suspected of opposing Moroccan rule of the Western Sahara territory and sympathizing with the Polisario Front armed opposition organization.

Evidence suggests that many of the "disappeared" in Morocco are still alive and confined in secret detention centres.

Please write courteous letters, in French if possible, urging that Embarca ment Taleb ould Husein be released immediately and unconditionally unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a fair trial. Send appeals to: SM Le Roi Hassan II/Office de SM le Roi/Palais Royal/Rabat/Morocco □

situations. This has led some governments deliberately to exploit family relations, by imprisoning, threatening and harassing prisoners' relatives. In Guinea, under the rule of the late President Sékou Touré, wives were pressurized by the state to divorce their imprisoned husbands.

Countless women are forced to live in the shadow of another person's "disappearance". A woman may suddenly become her family's sole source of support just at the time when she is facing the absence of a close relative and is trying to locate the "disappeared" victim. She may be effectively widowed by her husband's "disappearance", yet unable to claim state or other benefits because her hus-

band has not been declared dead, officially or legally. Members of the National Coordinating Committee of Widows of Guatemala, an Indian group known as CONAVIGUA, have denounced their government's attitude to providing compensation. The group has repeatedly alleged that government compensation is granted only if a widow attributes her husband's death to opposition guerrilla forces and if she ceases to pursue investigation into her husband's death or "disappearance".

Relatives of the "disappeared" face additional, emotional suffering in many cultures. Women often refuse to give up hope and search for years for husbands and children who have "disap-



Wafa' Idriss is one of at least 77 women arrested in Syria between August 1977 and February 1988 who remain in detention without charge or trial.

Hundreds of women have been arrested in Syria since 1985 because of their relationship to men sought by the security forces, or because of their own peaceful political activities.

Torture of political prisoners is systematic in Syria. It is carried out during interrogation to extract "confessions" and information, and to punish detainees.

Reports of rape by members of the security forces are numerous.

Please write courteous letters expressing concern at widespread reports that women have been subjected to severe torture and sexual abuse while in detention and asking that the 77 women be released immediately unless charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a prompt, fair trial. Send appeals to: His Excellency 'Abd al-Halim Khaddam/Vice-President/Office of the President/Presidential Palace/Damascus/Syrian Arab Republic□

peared", even though relatively few victims of "disappearance" survive this inhuman violation. But unless or until they reappear, or their bodies are found, their families suffer years of uncertainty, unable properly to mourn their loss and thus perhaps to lay their grief to rest.

In areas of civil turmoil or armed conflict, women are often subjected to brutal treatment simply because they live in a particular location or belong to a particular ethnic group. They are often caught in the crossfire between armed opposition groups and government forces, living under the threat of violence from both sides.

AI, as a matter of principle, condemns the torture and kill-

ing of prisoners by anyone, including opposition groups. It does not, however, treat such groups as though they had the status of governments. Nor does it address them unless they are certain of the essential attributes of a government, such as control over substantial territory and population. It is, after all, governments which have jurisdiction to determine criminal responsibility and to bring to justice those responsible for violent attacks on government authorities, security forces, and civilians. The state's exercise of such lawful authority, however, must conform to international standards of human rights and observe norms safeguarding fundamental human rights provided in domestic law.

Many governments do not maintain these norms. The rape of peasant women, either while in formal custody or when held by soldiers during counter-insurgency operations, is a common phenomenon in many countries. Governments often are complacent in the face of such abuse. Legal officials in Peru's Ayacucho department told AI representatives in 1986 that rape by government troops operating in rural areas was to be expected. In late September 1990, a Peruvian woman and her 17-year-old daughter were detained in a military base and repeatedly raped by a number of soldiers. Both women were subsequently released but warned not to report the rape. They have requested anonymity lest they face reprisals. Effective investigations into cases of rape in Peru are not known to have taken place nor have the perpetrators been brought to justice.

Women refugees and asylum-seekers have also been the victims of sexual abuse by police, soldiers or other government agents. Many of these women lack the support systems which would be provided in their own communities or by their close relatives. With few resources to protect them from abuse or to provide the means of redress, they become victims of a range of violations.

Cultural or social circumstances sometimes render women particularly isolated by the human rights violations they experience. They may choose not to report humiliating assaults by government authorities, fearing reprisals from their own families, traumatic social repercussions, or further attacks by government officials.

Women who choose not to remain silent in the face of human rights violations inflicted upon them may face barriers such as official tolerance of the injuries caused to them. If they are from disadvantaged social or economic groups, they may find that official channels of communication are closed to them. Law enforcement officials may not listen, and they may have no place to turn.

During the past decade, increasing numbers of women have spoken out for human rights protection. They have stated publicly and clearly what they and other members of their communities have suffered. They have also organized community and national groups to protest against human rights abuses. In some countries their vulnerability to such abuse has increased as they have assumed public leadership roles and spoken out about the special measures needed to protect women's human rights. Despite this, they continue to make their demands heard. The Committee of Mothers and Relatives of Political Prisoners, and Victims of Political Assassination and Disappearance, known as COMADRES, has been prominent for many years in the struggle to protect human rights in El Salvador. The COMADRES continue their work today, despite repeated threats against members of the group and violent attacks such as the October 1989 bombing of their San Salvadore offices.

Some women are subjected to human rights violations because of their relationship to people whom the authorities consider "dangerous"

The following month, soldiers raided the offices and arrested nine COMADRES activists. Some of those arrested later said that they had been blindfolded, handcuffed, and beaten in detention.

The Mutual Support Group for the Appearance of Our Relatives Alive, known as GAM, has been a target of violence in Guatemala. GAM members press government authorities to account for those who "disappear".

Several GAM leaders, including Rosario Godoy de Cuevas, were abducted and killed in 1985, apparently by government agents.

Other GAM members are now the target of threats. The group's leader, Nineth Montenegro de García, has received so many death threats that human rights activists worldwide have sent appeals on her behalf to the Guatemala-

lan authorities on a number of occasions. Her mother, whose house was strafed with machine-gunfire in July 1990, also appears to be at risk from government forces or people associated with them. The bullets recovered from the attack reportedly were of a calibre known to be used by the military.

Women have played prominent roles in South African human rights organizations such as the Detainees' Parents Support Committee and the Black Sash. Despite decades of repression, women activists have continued to mobilize against mass detentions, torture, and the injustices perpetuated by *apartheid*.

Noma India Mfeketo attended the 1985 International Women's Congress in Nairobi, representing the United Women's Congress and the Federation of South African Women. Her international prominence, however, did not protect her when she returned home: she spent nine months in detention without charge or trial in 1987 and was again detained for several months in 1988 and 1989. Like many of her colleagues, she was detained solely for the peaceful exercise of basic human rights.



Woman and child in refugee camp. Refugee women are particularly vulnerable to human rights abuses

Susan Aniban of Task Force Detainees, a human rights group in the Philippines, was reportedly detained and tortured in November 1988. Numerous women human rights workers there have been subjected to such ill-treatment.

Turkish officials detained several members of a women's organization in January 1990, after a police raid on

the offices of the Association of Democratic Women in Ankara. They were reportedly interrogated under torture.

The perseverance of women like these in the face of such persecution, along with the courage of many other men and women who continue to fight for human rights, has yielded significant

results in recent years. More information is now available to the international community about what is happening to women worldwide than ever before. The momentum to end patterns of abuse has increased as more women have joined efforts to publicize the facts and to press for change.

The international campaign is expanding and accelerating on behalf of women who struggled for their rights and did not survive, on behalf of women now struggling to survive, and on behalf not only of women but of all people who ought never to have to face human rights violations. Human rights activists are demanding that protections guaranteed under international treaties become a reality in all countries.

The international human rights covenants, The UN Convention against Torture, the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and many other agreements, establish minimum standards of government responsibility.

If governments ignore their responsibilities to any sector of society — whether to women, to the young, or to members of ethnic or religious minorities — then no one's human rights are safe. □

Maria Nonna Santa Clara, a social worker in Naga City, and her colleague, Angelina Llenaresas, "disappeared" on 26 April 1989. They had been visiting a woman in Santa Cruz, who said later that she saw them being followed by three unknown men after leaving her house. Eye-witnesses reported seeing Maria Nonna Santa Clara later the same day shouting for help from a military jeep in Naga City.

Military authorities have denied all knowledge of the whereabouts of the two women, despite substantial evidence that they were responsible for their abduction. The family of Maria Nonna Santa Clara, and others involved in trying to clarify her fate, have received death threats which they believe to have come from military sources.

Please write courteous letters urging the government to take prompt action to establish the whereabouts of Maria Nonna Santa Clara and her colleague, and to bring to justice those responsible for their "disappearance". Send appeals to: President Corazon Aquino/Malacanang Palace/Manila/Philippines □



IRAQ

Widespread abuse follows invasion

WIDESPREAD human rights abuses were perpetrated by Iraqi forces following the invasion of Kuwait on 2 August 1990. These include the arbitrary arrest and detention without trial of thousands of civilians and military personnel; systematic torture; the imposition of the death penalty and the extrajudicial execution of hundreds of unarmed civilians, including children; and the "disappearance" of hundreds of detainees, many of whom are feared dead. The abuses were detailed in a report published by AI in December 1990*.

AI takes no position on the conflict in the Gulf. The organization is concerned, however, about human rights violations taking place in that context.

AI's report contained numerous testimonies from former detainees, who said they were held incommunicado without charge or trial and tortured throughout their detention. No less than 38 methods of torture are cited in the report which concluded that the brutality of the treatment inflicted on detainees appeared designed to terrorize the population at large and to discourage people from expressing, in whatever form, their opposition to the Iraqi presence in Kuwait.

Families were given no official

notification of the arrest or place of detention of the detainees, who therefore effectively "disappeared" in custody, and remained ignorant of their fate and whereabouts until they had either been released or executed. The bodies of those executed were either found in the streets of Kuwait City, or were dumped outside their homes.

From about mid-August, a pattern of extrajudicial executions emerged, whereby, according to one source, "the Iraqis would bring the detainee back to his home and ask his family to identify him. Once he had been identified, the Iraqis would shoot him in the back of the head, right in front of his family". Children were among those who died in this manner.

Iraq also extended the scope of the death penalty in August, shortly after the invasion. However, AI has concluded that ostensibly criminal offences, such as looting, were used by the Iraqi authorities as a pretext to execute individuals who had taken part in opposition activity against Iraqi forces in Kuwait.

In December, AI called on the Iraqi Government to implement a series of recommendations, including: granting immediate access to the International Commit-



This body, left hanging from a crane in Kuwait City, was said to be that of an Iraqi soldier executed for looting on 16 August

tee of the Red Cross to enable it to provide protection to prisoners and civilians in Kuwait; releasing immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience; investigating all reports of torture, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances"; and taking immedi-

ate steps to ensure that no further torture, executions or other abuses are carried out.

**Iraq/Occupied Kuwait: Human rights violations since 2 August is available from AI sections or the International Secretariat. □*

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

Eight granted clemency to mark AI's visit

THE Yemeni Government told an AI delegation in November 1990 that the country would accede to the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Eight political prisoners under sentence of death since 1985 were granted clemency in honour of AI's visit. The government also assured AI that it would review the cases of all untried political detainees currently held.

AI's delegates, led by the Secretary General, met the President and Vice-President, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior and Justice, with whom they raised AI's concerns in Yemen, including cases of sentenced political prisoners and untried detainees, irregularities in arrest and detention procedures, and the continued use of the death penalty and of shackles in prisons. In addition, the Secretary General addressed

the Yemeni Parliament. He welcomed the recent positive human rights developments in the country but drew attention to AI's outstanding concerns.

AI was publicly invited to visit the country by the President of Yemen in February 1990. □

JORDAN

Prisoners freed by royal pardon

EIGHT prisoners were released in September and November 1990 following royal pardons granted by King Hussein bin Talal. One had been sentenced to death and the others to lengthy terms of imprisonment after unfair trials by the Martial Law Court for political offences involving violence, including an attempt on the life of the King. □

VENEZUELA

Grave of Caracas victims exhumed

IN November, a judge ordered the exhumation of unmarked graves believed to contain the remains of a number of those who died in Caracas between 27 February and 10 March 1989, when hundreds were killed by members of the security forces.

A forensic anthropologist visited the country between 26 and 30 November as an AI delegate to monitor the investigations and gather information on the location of the burial site, the recovery of

the bodies and their identification. Several bodies were recovered to be analysed by local forensic experts.

The victims' relatives welcomed the developments but, together with human rights monitors, continued to call for full investigations into the killings — the circumstances of several of which suggested the victims were extrajudicially executed. However, little progress had been reported by the end of 1990. □

MAURITANIA

Reports of torture

OVER 1,000 people, including at least three former prisoners of conscience, were arrested in Mauritania's capital, Nouakchott, and in Nouadhibou in November and December 1990. They were detained in military barracks in the Nouakchott area. A government official said they had been detained in connection with a conspiracy to overthrow the government, but none of them is known to have been formally charged

with any offence. AI has received reports that at least 15 of them may have died in custody as a result of torture. All the detainees belong to the black Hal-pulaar ethnic group, which the authorities suspect of opposing the government. There have been widespread arrests, torture, "disappearance" and extrajudicial executions of Hal-pulaar people, particularly in the south of the country, since April 1989. □

SAUDI ARABIA

Women detained for driving

ON 6 November 1990 a women's demonstration took place in Riyadh in protest at the country's traditional prohibition against women driving cars. Dozens of women drove cars in convoy along a main thoroughfare in Riyadh. Forty-nine women who took part were detained for some hours, but were released.

Salih al-'Azzaz, a prominent writer and journalist, was also arrested on suspicion of being one of the organizers of the demonstration. He was reportedly taking photographs of the demonstration at the time of

his arrest. He was reportedly held incommunicado at the *Mabahith al-'Ammah* (General Intelligence) Headquarters in the 'Ulaisha district of Riyadh, and was only allowed family visits at the end of December. AI considers him a prisoner of conscience and has called for his immediate and unconditional release.

A week after the demonstration the ban on female drivers was formally made law. The law states that anyone violating the prohibition for women to drive is liable to an unspecified punishment. □



UNITED KINGDOM

Broadwater Farm case to go to appeal

THE United Kingdom Government announced in December the referral of the case of Engin Raghip to the Court of Appeal. Engin Raghip is one of three young men serving life sentences for the murder of a policeman during a 1985 riot at the Broadwater Farm public housing estate in London. The government based its decision on new evidence concerning psychological testing.

AI has consistently urged the government to review all the Broadwater Farm cases in which convictions were based solely on confessions. The organization had received many allegations that confessions had been obtained through coercion and in the absence of a lawyer. In the February 1987 trial three juveniles were acquitted of murder after the judge criticized police conduct in the interrogation of two of them. At a

subsequent disciplinary hearing the officer leading the murder investigation was found guilty of denying a 13-year-old boy access to a lawyer during three days of detention. Another police officer still faces disciplinary charges over the boy's interrogation. □

AI delegation visits India

AN AI delegation visited Delhi from 10 to 17 December 1990 to attend the World Congress on Human Rights. While there, they sought meetings with government officials, including Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar. Such meetings had been approved in principle by the previous government which resigned in November 1990. □



Relatives grieve over the bodies of the dead

GUATEMALA

Army kills fifteen civilians

AT least 15 people, three of them children, were reportedly killed and 19 others, including several children, were wounded when soldiers opened fire on a crowd of unarmed villagers at a military base in Sololá Guatemala on the evening of 2 December 1990.

According to eyewitness reports, the events leading to the killings began when soldiers from the base, who were allegedly drunk, broke into a villager's house, tried to rob him and reportedly opened fire and wounded him. A crowd of some 1,500 went to the base to protest and were fired on by soldiers.

Survivors interviewed in hospital by local and international press and human rights groups insist that the crowd was peaceful and unarmed and that the soldiers opened fire when leaders of the

protest asked to speak to the base commander.

Military personnel initially claimed that the villagers had provoked the incident. However, after widespread national and international expressions of outrage, military spokesmen announced that two soldiers, one said to have provoked the initial incident at the villager's home, the other the base commander had been detained.

AI has asked the government to say whether there will be an inquiry into the killings, and urged that any findings be made known promptly, that any criminal acts committed be referred to the tribunals and that steps be taken to ensure adequate medical care for the injured, the security of all witnesses to either incident, and appropriate compensation for victims' relatives. □

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SOUTH KOREA: In Issue No. 1, published January 1991, it is stated that prisoners of conscience who do not renounce their communist beliefs may be detained indefinitely. The Public Security Law, which allowed for such detention, was repealed in 1989. However, political prisoners held under national security legislation, including prisoners of conscience, have been denied the benefit of measures such as release on parole, unless they agree to be "anti-communist".