

PUBLIC

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Fear of Flogging

26 September 2000

BELIZE

Estevan Sho (age 23)

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An inmate of Hattieville Prison is reportedly facing 10 lashes with a whip. Such corporal punishment contravenes the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment to which Belize is party.

Estevan Sho has reportedly been sentenced to 10 lashes with a tamarind whip as punishment for his recent escape from prison. He escaped on 7 September, and was recaptured on 15 September. On 18 September, a panel of Visiting Judges ruled that he be flogged as punishment for his escape. The sentence has reportedly not yet been implemented, and will be carried out at the discretion of the prison authorities, in consultation with the Minister of Prisons, Hon. Dickie Bradley.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Article 52 of the 1957 Belize Prison Rules allows judges to recommend corporal punishment against detainees as punishment for several specific offences. Until this year that practice had not been used since 1975. However, since early 2000 at least three inmates have been flogged, the most recent, Herman Lanza, was flogged on 24 August for allegedly having attacked another prisoner. In July this year Belizean authorities expanded the offences for which corporal punishment can be used to include possession of weapons or attempted escape by inmates.

Amnesty International believes that corporal punishment serves no justifiable penal purpose and brutalizes all those involved in the process. Corporal punishment is in direct contravention of article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states "no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment." It also contravenes article 7 of the Constitution of Belize as well as international human rights standards.

#### **RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:**

- expressing concern at the report that Estevan Sho is to be flogged, and at the resurgence of the use of corporal punishment;
- stating that you consider the use of flogging as punishment to be cruel, inhuman and degrading, contrary to Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- expressing your concern that Belize violates the rights recognized in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) by permitting sentences of corporal punishment to be imposed and inflicted in prison.

#### **APPEALS TO:**

Minster of Housing, Urban Renewal and Home Affairs  
Honorable Dickie BRADLEY  
East Block  
Belmopan, BELIZE  
**Fax: + 501 8 23 390**

Prime Minister

Prime Minister Said MUSA  
Office of the Prime Minister  
New Administrative Building  
Belmopan, BELIZE

**Fax: + 501 8 20071**

**(mark for the attention of the Prime Minister)**

Attorney General

Mr. Godfrey Smith  
Attorney General's Chambers  
c/o Prime Minister's Office  
New Administration Building  
Belmopan, BELIZE

**Fax: + 501 8 20071**

**COPIES TO:**

Ombudsman

Paul Rodriguez  
56 Regent Street  
Belize City

**Newspapers**

Amandala

Amandala Press  
3304 Partridge St.  
PO Box 15  
Belize City  
Belize

**Fax: + 501 2 75 934**

The Belize Times

PO Box 506  
3, Queen St.  
Belize City  
Belize

**Fax: + 501 2 31 940**

and to diplomatic representatives of Belize accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 November 2000.