

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: AFR 32/003/2005 (Public)  
News Service No: 064  
23 March 2005

**Embargo Date: 23 March 2005 08:00 GMT**

## Kenya: Crackdown on "terrorism" violating human rights

Kenyan authorities must take immediate action to halt numerous human rights violations committed against suspects detained during recent "anti-terrorism" operations, Amnesty International said today.

In a new report presented at a news conference in Nairobi, the organisation gave details of extensive violations including arbitrary arrest, incommunicado detention without charge, torture and harassment of family members. The human rights violations occurred during "anti-terrorism" operations conducted since the 2002 bombing of a hotel near Mombasa that killed 15 people.

"States have a duty to protect their populations from violent criminal acts, but this duty is not a license to torture and abuse suspects in secret locations and harass their families. The Kenyan authorities have failed to comply with international human rights law and standards, as well as Kenyan law. Security and human rights go hand in hand, and are not alternative options" said Kenya researcher Sheila Keetharuth.

The report, *Kenya: The impact of "anti-terrorism" operations on human rights*, is based on interviews with former detainees, families of suspects, human rights activists, lawyers and faith-based organisations carried out in Nairobi, Mombasa and Lamu. The Amnesty International delegation also met with government and law enforcement officials.

*"During interrogation, they told me that if I did not speak the truth, they would beat me up. All they wanted to know was where my husband was and I did not know. At a certain moment, they actually started beating me with wooden sticks on my legs, my knees and the soles of my feet. A woman police officer carried out the beating. The next day I could not walk and had fever. I asked to be brought to the hospital, but they refused to take me."*

Testimony from wife of "terrorist" suspect interviewed by Amnesty International on 17 May 2004.

The report's main findings include:

- The use of torture and other ill-treatment during detention including physical abuse;
- Detention of suspects without charge in undisclosed locations and without access to a lawyer or relatives;
- The holding of suspects in degrading and unsanitary conditions without access to medical care when needed;

Harassment of family members and the arbitrary detention of relatives to put pressure on suspects to hand themselves in;  
The failure of police to show warrants when arresting individuals or conducting searches of property.

Amnesty International is calling on the Kenyan authorities to ensure respect for the rights of anyone arrested or detained according to international law and standards. In particular, detainees must be given prompt access to legal counsel, relatives and medical care if needed and any allegations of torture or other ill-treatment must be fully and independently investigated.

The organisation also urges the Kenya Police Force to properly train its officers at all levels in human rights law and avoid unlawful arrests, detentions and the holding of people without charge or trial.

For a copy of the report, *Kenya: The impact of "anti-terrorism" operations on human rights* please see:  
<http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engaf320022005>

Public Document

\*\*\*\*\*

For more information please call Amnesty International's press office in London, UK, on +44 20 7413 5566

Amnesty International, 1 Easton St., London WC1X 0DW. web: <http://www.amnesty.org>

For latest human rights news view <http://news.amnesty.org>