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Australia: Police Use of Excessive Force Against Aborigines No Isolated Incident

The brutal force used by police officers against Aborigines last month in Queensland is not an isolated incident -- and its video recording provides evidence that cannot be dismissed, Amnesty International said today in a letter to the state Government of Queensland.

In the incident in Ipswich, Queensland, police officers were filmed by a security video camera punching and kicking several Aborigines while they were being held by other officers. The video recording was only made public two weeks ago.

“The force used during the arrests of at least three of the seven Aborigines involved was excessive and constituted ill-treatment,” Amnesty International said.

“What happened in Ipswich has happened under more or less similar circumstances elsewhere in Australia. The difference this time is that a video recording provides evidence that cannot be easily dismissed.”

Amnesty International today launched a report, *Australia: Police Brutality Against Queensland Aborigines*, describing the event which took place in the early hours of 22 March in Ipswich. The incident not only involved Ipswich police and security guards, but also United States military police officers who were on duty at the request of local authorities. The report also places the Ipswich incident in the context of a new study into formal assault complaints against Queensland police officers.

“It is important that the incident is properly investigated and that those responsible for excessive use of force are brought to justice in order to ensure that good faith efforts to improve strained Aboriginal-police relations are not undermined by the event,” Amnesty International said.
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