

Burundi's children suffer

Raped, tortured and killed, children suffer the consequences of war

Celestin Manirambona and Gerard Ndayikeza were arrested during an identity check in Bujumbura in 1999. They were just 14 and 15 years old, and had come to the capital from northern Burundi about two years earlier to look for work. Both eked out a living by selling peanuts on the streets.

When they could not produce identity papers, they were taken to the Kigobe Public Security Police (PSP) station in Bujumbura. They were then accused of being members of one of the armed groups that have been engaged in a bitter power struggle with the government since the mid-1990s.

Both Celestin and Gerard said they were beaten to make them confess to being combatants. Celestin claims that he was hit repeatedly with a truncheon and told that the beating would only stop if he confessed. The two boys were held for about six months, then transferred to Mpimba central prison. They have not yet had a chance to defend themselves in court.

Like most of the children in Burundi's prisons, Celestin and Gerard are poor and uneducated. They are vulnerable not only because of their age, status and poverty, but also because they are isolated from their families and have no one to defend them.

There are about 160 children under the age of 18 held in prisons in Burundi, out of a prison population of approximately 9,000. The inadequacies of the Burundian justice and prison systems leave them particularly at risk of human rights abuses, both by the authorities and by fellow prisoners.

Children in Burundi have been arrested without proper investigation, on the basis of accusations prompted by ethnic discrimination, personal rivalry or greed. They have been held incommunicado, without access to the outside world. They have been tortured. They have been detained for long periods without trial, often in overcrowded and dangerously insanitary conditions. Many are malnourished. In most prisons and detention centres children are held with adults, regardless of their age, and are vulnerable to physical and sexual abuse.

AI is publishing a report in September which focuses on children in detention in Burundi, because it believes that the juvenile justice system is an area where real improvements can be achieved without delay.

However, life for all children in Burundi is harsh and dangerous. The right to education and health care for many children is an illusion, with access to limited facilities further diminished by poverty and insecurity. An increasing number of children are living on the streets. The armed conflict that has raged for nearly 10 years and the subsequent human rights crisis have had a devastating impact on Burundian society.

Children in Burundi continue to suffer the consequences of the armed conflict. Hundreds of children have been deliberately killed, maimed or wounded. Thousands of child soldiers have been recruited by all parties to the conflict. Sexual violence against women and young girls by combatants is widespread. The story of Fabienne,

(not her real name) is typical. Following an attack in Gitega province in 2001, Fabienne, then aged 13, was forced to accompany a group of around 30 combatants believed to be from PALIPEHUTU-FNL, one of Burundi's most active armed political groups. She was forced to walk to the Kibira forest with the combatants, acting as a porter. She was also repeatedly raped.

“They took us as wives straightaway. We had to cook for them. If a cow was killed, we had to cook it...When they came back, they would eat and drink, then they would call for you. They were so many. It was so painful... If you refused, they used sticks to whip you... I wasn't even the youngest. Some girls were even younger than me... Some people fled and didn't come back. We didn't know if they'd got away or had been killed.”

Approximately 450,000 people are currently displaced within Burundi as a result of the conflict. Some, including approximately 200,000 children, are living in camps, where conditions are generally harsh and sometimes appalling. Others are “dispersed”- trying to survive as best they can. Some have been forcibly “regrouped” or relocated. Malnutrition, dehydration, overcrowding, poor sanitation and inadequate medical care have led to high levels of disease and an alarming mortality rate, particularly among children. A further 180,000 children live in refugee camps just over the border in Tanzania. They suffer from poor diet, lack of access to education and healthcare, and are vulnerable to recruitment by armed political groups.

The Transitional Government of Burundi has a particular obligation to protect children, and especially children in its custody. Children should only be imprisoned as a last resort, for the shortest possible time, and should be held in humane conditions separate from adults. There can never be any excuses for the torture of children in detention: the strongest possible measures should be taken by the government to investigate such abuses, bring the perpetrators to justice and compensate the victims. All parties to the conflict should ensure respect for civilian life by their forces and end the use of child soldiers.

Cambodian justice system in disarray

“The government just allows these people to commit the same abuses again and again and people live in constant fear.”

These were the words of a witness who saw six young children die when a drunken soldier fired a rocket into a crowd at an ice-cream stall. Three of the dead were sisters, aged six, three and two. Another six children were injured in the blast.

The soldiers were stationed at Krang Kontroul village in Kampong Chhnang Province to protect the villagers from Khmer Rouge fighters who had recently been active in the area. The soldiers were ill-disciplined, and had reportedly assaulted and raped villagers, as well as stealing food and money from them.

The children were gathered as usual at a local drinks and ice-cream stall on 18 September 1996, when five heavily armed and apparently drunk soldiers sitting nearby began arguing. One fired a B-40 rocket launcher over the heads of his companions, into the group of children. The soldier then fled, leaving his four companions wounded.

Six years after this tragedy the villagers of Krang Kontroul have received little compensation: a bag of rice and approximately US\$20 to each of the families whose children were killed; no help at all for the injured. No one has been held to account for

the killings: there has been no justice.

This failure reflects a justice system in Cambodia which is weak, corrupt and subject to political interference and which daily fails in its duties and responsibilities.

The Cambodian judiciary was wiped out in the 1970s, during a decade of civil war followed by Khmer Rouge rule. The years that followed were marked by continuing conflict and the rebuilt justice system was weak and flawed. Peace accords in 1991 led to a period of UN administration, but the ravages the country had endured would not be quickly or easily redressed.

Cambodia still relies heavily on international aid. Donor countries are increasingly aware of the need to build a strong, independent judicial system, capable of upholding basic rights and protecting the vulnerable.

Poor facilities, low salaries, political interference, lack of education and training, and weak and poorly enforced legislation combine to produce a judicial system in which people have no confidence. These shortcomings prevent not only justice today but also justice for the crimes of the past. The courts are no longer a credible deterrent against crimes in the future.

Previous initiatives to improve the judicial system have consistently failed to yield practical results. Donor countries should play a more active role in pushing for reforms and ensuring that aid packages include a human rights component. Both the government and donor countries have an important role to play in ensuring necessary changes in the justice system.

For more information see: Cambodia - Urgent need for judicial reform (AI Index: ASA 23/004/2002).

Time to eliminate torture and ill-treatment in Peru

Electric shock, asphyxiation, near-drowning, beating and sexual abuse including rape, are some of the methods of torture and ill-treatment used in Peru. Police officers as well as prison guards and military personnel are responsible. Recent victims include political prisoners, especially those held on “terrorism-related” charges, ordinary criminal suspects and military conscripts. They include men, women and children.

Most victims report being ill-treated or tortured in police custody during the pre-trial investigation, in order to force them to confess to a crime. Police and prosecutors rely heavily, often solely, on these confessions to secure convictions. Confessions extracted under torture and ill-treatment have been admitted as evidence in court, even when later withdrawn or shown to have been extracted under duress. Torture is also used to punish detainees and prisoners.

Many victims of torture withdraw their complaints because they are intimidated, harassed and threatened. Such acts of intimidation are committed with impunity.

The Peruvian authorities must take de-cisive and wideranging measures to eradicate torture and ill-treatment to ensure that all Peruvians can live free of violence perpetrated by the state. See Peru: Torture and ill-treatment – Time to put words into practice (AI Index: AMR 46/005/2002).

In December 2000, Elisa Rivera Toribio, an inmate of Santa Lucía Prison in Pasco

department, reported that she had been sexually abused on many occasions while in custody. She said a prison guard went into her cell several times very early in the morning and touched her without her consent. The last of these attacks took place in February 2001 when the same guard attempted to rape her.

Elisa Rivera filed a complaint for abuse of authority against three prison officers.

Since Elisa Rivera reported these incidents she has apparently suffered reprisals by the prison guards. She has been prevented from selling food in the prison, which was her only way of making a living and supporting her seven-year-old son. She has been falsely accused of causing disorder inside the prison and has been threatened with transfer to a different prison if she refuses to drop the charges. The case is currently under judicial investigation.

Huber Méndez, who was 16 years old at the time, was stopped in the city of Huamanga by police carrying out a special operation against the rise of juvenile gangs in the area.

He was taken to the police station and stripped naked by three police officers. He was then beaten and a metal chain with two pieces of metal on each end, which the police allegedly found in his possession, was forced into his anus.

He was charged with belonging to a gang and committing “aggravated terrorism”. An investigation into the torture of Huber Méndez was carried out and two police officers were sentenced to six years’ imprisonment for torturing him.

During the legal proceedings, Huber Méndez was reportedly followed by unknown persons and his family were threatened with intimidating messages.

When the charges against Huber Méndez were brought in a civil court, for the crime of belonging to a gang, he was acquitted. The case against him of “aggravated terrorism” was closed in the military court after the public prosecutor decided that there was no case to answer.

Human rights lawyers face harassment in Syria

Syrian security forces are targeting emerging human rights groups in an apparent attempt to stop them working in the country. Many lawyers working with these groups are also being harassed by the government controlled Bar Association, which works closely with the ruling Ba’th Party and the security forces.

Syria has been ruled since 1963 under emergency legislation, which gives the security forces virtually unchecked powers and means that human rights groups are at constant risk of being banned.

The Human Rights Association in Syria (HRAS), and the older Committees for the Defence of Human Rights in Syria, are the main human rights groups working in the country despite the restrictions. Other human rights groups are struggling to carry on their work in the face of restrictions on discussion forums and civil society groups imposed in February 2001.

Human rights defenders Haytham al-Maleh, Khalil Ma’tuq and Anwar al-Bunni are three of the lawyers currently defending 10 prominent prisoners of conscience. All three have suffered harassment, threats and surveillance by the security forces.

Haytham al-Maleh has been regularly summoned by the security forces and the Bar

Association because of his involvement with HRAS and statements to the media. In June he was summoned to the

political security department and questioned about the activities of HRAS and the first issue of its journal Teyyarat, which carried articles about Mezze Prison, civil society forums and trade unions.

Anwar al-Bunni and his family have received threats from the security forces. There have also been smear campaigns against him to deter potential clients. In June, Anwar al-Bunni was beaten and forcibly ejected from the Supreme State Security Court when he demanded an investigation into allegations of ill-treatment made by his client, prisoner of conscience, 'Aref Dalila. The court chairperson, a military officer, ordered Anwar al-Bunni out of the court and banned him indefinitely from the Supreme State Security Court.

Khalil Ma'tuq, who has defended scores of prisoners of conscience including Riad al-Turk and Nizar Nayyuf, has been systematically harassed and questioned by Military Intelligence.

In April he was questioned, at a disciplinary session of the Damascus Bar Association, about a memorandum sent to the judiciary concerning the unfair trial of prisoner of conscience Mamun al-Humsi. Also in April, the Damascus Bar Association decided, subject to the approval of the Bar Council, to suspend Haytham al-Maleh from practising law for three years and Anwar al-Bunni for three months.

Will the forgotten victims of the massacres in Gujarat obtain justice?

The plight of the people in the Indian state of Gujarat was largely forgotten by the rest of the world when attention focused on the possible impending war between India and Pakistan in Kashmir.

On 27 February, 58 Hindus were killed in an attack on a train in Godhra, Gujarat. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, a Hindu nationalist organization, called for a day of agitation, which was interpreted as a call for retaliation and sparked a wave of violence and massacres against the Muslim community over the following weeks. Many human rights groups say that the death toll could be as high as 2,500.

There are concerns that the violence, which reached shocking levels of brutality, may have been deliberately planned with the support of various Hindu nationalist organizations close to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Reports also suggest that both the state administration and the police took insufficient action to protect civilians and in many cases may have colluded with the attackers and actively participated in the violence.

The violence destroyed the homes, places of worship and means of livelihood of thousands of innocent civilians. About 140,000 people were displaced in the aftermath of the massacres and many of them continue to live in relief camps in appalling conditions. The state government has recently cut off food supplies to some of the camps.

AI believes that the expectation that the attackers would not be punished is one of the causes of the open, systematic and brutal nature of the violence in Gujarat.

In the aftermath of the violence, the same police force which has been accused of having colluded with the attackers has been put in charge of the investigations into the

massacres. AI believes that the investigations should be carried out by an agency independent of the Gujarat state police and state administration.

In August the ruling BJP called for early elections in the state of Gujarat. Analysts believe this was done to capitalize on the polarization of the electorate along communal lines produced by the violence. The Election Commission of India (a federal government body) has expressed the opinion that the law and order situation in the state is too fragile to allow elections to be held.

When AI sought permission to visit Gujarat in July to investigate the violence, its delegates were effectively denied access. As a matter of urgency, the government needs to deliver justice to the victims and protect those people who have been displaced. Unless those responsible are brought to justice those who perpetrated the violence will remain free to repeat their terrible crimes.

New hope for peace in Sri Lanka

A recent visit to Sri Lanka by AI found that the cease-fire agreement has made a significant impact in reducing human rights abuses. However, the reduction in killings, torture, and abductions seen since the cease-fire will only last if practical measures to protect human rights are discussed, negotiated and promoted now.

Delegates travelled to the Vanni region to meet with members of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) leadership, including the head of the political wing Mr Thamil Chelvan. Discussions with the LTTE focused on the recruitment of child soldiers, executions, “disappearances”, arbitrary detention, the return of internally displaced people, and the peace process.

In Colombo, delegates met President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, and various ministers to discuss issues such as impunity, torture and rape in custody, and the peace process.

During its visit, AI urged both the LTTE and the government to establish a clear and practical human rights framework for the peace process.

New government risks escalating human rights crisis in Colombia

Colombia has a new President who takes office during a spiralling human rights crisis. Each and every day, around 20 people are killed in political violence, the majority outside of combat. The security forces, their paramilitary allies and guerrilla forces are all responsible for serious human rights abuses including killings, “disappearances” and kidnappings.

Álvaro Uribe Vélez became the new president of Colombia in August. However, many of the new government’s announced plans threaten to exacerbate the already serious human rights crisis by undermining the protection of civilians and strengthening the mechanisms ensuring impunity for human rights violations.

In an open letter to the new President*, AI has expressed concern over:

plans to create a million-strong civilian militia of informers, which risks dragging the civilian population further into the conflict and consolidating the army-backed paramilitary strategy;

proposals to grant greater powers to the armed forces and to allow the military judicial police powers which could facilitate impunity for human rights violations;

constitutional reform which could seriously undermine human rights safeguards; and plans to re-establish the President's power to impose a state of siege, which could facilitate human rights violations by removing judicial and legislative oversight.

What needs to be done is clear. The international community and human rights organizations have identified a blueprint for action to tackle the human rights emergency. This is summarized in UN recommendations on:

ending impunity for human rights violations;

combating paramilitary groups and severing their links with the security forces;

protecting human rights defenders and other vulnerable sectors of civilian society.

ACT NOW!

CHALLENGE THE NEW GOVERNMENT

PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS IN COLOMBIA

*For further information and to take action see AI's website:

www.amnesty.org/actnow

Shot dead by UK police

Harry Stanley was shot dead by police on 22 September 1999 in East London. He was walking home carrying a plastic bag containing a table leg and had stopped in a pub, where another customer, mistaking his Scottish accent for Irish and the table leg for a sawn-off shotgun, had called the police. As a result, a Metropolitan Police armed response unit arrived in the area. Two officers followed Harry Stanley and fired two shots. He died instantly.

The inquest into the death of Harry Stanley concluded on 21 June 2002 with the jury returning an open verdict. AI is concerned that the coroner explicitly prevented the jury from returning a verdict of unlawful killing.

The officer who fired the fatal shot claimed that he was acting to protect his colleague's life as he saw Harry Stanley aim the object wrapped in the plastic bag at him. However, the direction of the fatal bullet suggests that Harry Stanley was facing away from the officers at the time of the shooting.

Following a police investigation into the incident, the prosecuting authorities decided in December 2000 not to prosecute the police officers involved. Lawyers for Harry Stanley's family challenged this decision through the courts, forcing the prosecution service to review that decision. However, in December 2001 the decision not to prosecute was confirmed.

AI continues to be concerned about the lack of police accountability in cases where serious allegations of human rights violations have arisen. The case of Harry Stanley reinforces AI's concern about the lack of independence and impartiality of the present system for investigating police misconduct, where police investigate themselves.

AI is also concerned that the inquest system does not guarantee that alleged violations of the right to life are investigated according to the standards required by international human rights law, particularly under Article 2 of the European Convention for the

Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

See United Kingdom: Deaths in custody: lack of police accountability (AI Index: EUR 45/42/00).

Updates

Egypt: trial of alleged gays

Fifty allegedly gay men are on trial before a criminal court. They were among 52 men tried in 2001 for their alleged sexual orientation. In May President Mubarak annulled the verdict against them, leading to the release of 21 prisoners of conscience.

The Egyptian government recently said that “homosexuals should not be subjected to any kind of discrimination”. However, the retrial, which started in July, demonstrates that charges of “habitual debauchery” continue to be used to criminalize consensual homosexual relations in private.

Several of the men alleged that they were tortured, including beatings with a stick on the soles of the feet (falaka), during the first stages of their detention. Gays – or those perceived to be gays – face a heightened risk of torture and ill-treatment in police stations and prisons in Egypt. Please continue to send appeals. See Worldwide appeal February 2002.

Tanzania: thanks to AI

“When I was in jail I received thousands and thousands of letters from all kinds of peoples, including children, of every walk of life expressing their sympathy and giving me their moral support. For all that, I am very much thankful and believe me, I have failed to get the best human expression that would represent my true gratitude to them all.”

Juma Duni Haji recently sent this message of thanks after meeting an AI delegation in Zanzibar in May 2002. He and Machano Khamis Ali, two leading members of the main opposition party, were released from jail in Zanzibar in October 2001. They had been arrested in February 2001 and charged with murdering a police officer during a demonstration at which they were not present. See Worldwide appeal May 2001.

Syrian lawyer sentenced

The Supreme State Security Court has sentenced lawyer Riad al-Turk (72) to two and a half years in prison on charges of “attempting to change the constitution by illegal means”. He was arrested with nine others in August and September 2001 for their involvement with emerging civil society groups and forums. He had been released in 1998 after having been arbitrarily detained without charge or trial for over 17 years. He suffers from a heart condition and diabetes.

AI continues to call for his immediate and unconditional release. See Worldwide appeal January 2002.

Iranian lawyer's sentence upheld

On 16 July an appeals court upheld the five-year prison sentence and 70 lashes imposed on prominent lawyer, Nasser Zarafshan, by a military court in March. Despite having reportedly appealed to the Supreme Court, he was taken into custody on 7 August. He was scheduled to undergo medical tests to determine whether he was healthy enough to face 70 lashes. Please continue to send appeals. See Worldwide appeal June 2002.

Pakistan: Yousuf Ali shot in jail

Prisoner of conscience Yousuf Ali was killed by another inmate in prison in Lahore, Pakistan, on 12 June. He was shot dead at point blank range as he was being transferred to a new cell. It is unclear how the gun was brought into the prison. His killer was a member of a banned Islamist organization reportedly promoting religiously motivated violence.

Yousuf Ali had been sentenced to death under the blasphemy laws for peacefully expressing his religious beliefs. AI has repeatedly highlighted the abuse of the blasphemy laws. Dozens of people have been charged with religious offences, either solely due to their minority religious belief, or because someone has made unfounded and malicious accusations against them.

Please write, calling for a full investigation into Yousuf Ali's killing and for those guilty to be brought to justice. Call for the safety of all those currently held on blasphemy charges to be ensured. Send appeals to: Lieutenant General (Retired) Khalid Maqbool, Governor of Punjab Province, Governor's House, Lahore, Pakistan. Fax:+92 42 9200077.

Worldwide appeals

Georgia

Student alleges electric shock torture

Veterinary student Alexander Guguneishvili, aged 21, was reportedly given electric shocks and beaten by police to force him to confess to robberies he says he did not commit.

He was talking to his friends in the yard of school No. 16 in Rustavi, on 20 April 2002, when about 10 police officers arrived by car to detain him. He says they threw him to the floor and tried to push a sawn-off gun into his trousers to fabricate a case against him. He was subsequently charged with "robbery" and "possession of firearms".

The police took him to Rustavi regional police station. He said that, because he refused to confess to the crimes, they handcuffed him and hung him on an iron bar attached between two tables, for about five hours. They reportedly blindfolded him and beat him on his back. When he still refused to confess he said that they attached wires to his toes and gave him electric shocks. Eventually he gave up and agreed to sign a confession. He told his lawyer: "My legs were trembling and jumping uncontrollably and an artery in my throat was incredibly painful after the electric shocks."

An independent expert who examined him at the end of April confirmed that his injuries could have resulted from beatings with a heavy, blunt object, and from

electric shocks. He was not informed of his rights following his detention and no medical examination was carried out at the police station.

Alexander Guguneishvili is currently detained at the investigation-isolation facility No. 5 in Tbilisi. There are serious concerns about the impartiality of the investigation into the torture allegations. Alexander Guguneishvili's lawyer said "The procuracy officials who conduct the investigation and the torturers know each other and have close links. It's not serious and is completely superficial."

Please write, expressing concern at allegations that Alexander Guguneishvili was tortured at Rustavi regional police station during the night of 20 April 2002, in order to force a confession; urging the authorities to ensure that the investigation into the torture allegations is conducted thoroughly and impartially, and that anyone reasonably suspected of torture is brought to justice.

Send appeals to: President of Georgia, Eduard Shevardnadze, Gruzija; 380018 g. Tbilisi; pr. Rustaveli, 8; Georgia. Fax: + 995 32 - 99 96 30 / 99 08 79 / 98 23 54 e-mail: office@presidpress.gov.ge

Equatorial Guinea

Imprisoned and tortured for internet article

Fabián Nsué Nguema Obono was arrested in April for criticizing government policy. He was accused of defamation and slandering the Head of State.

He is a lawyer and member of the Popular Union (UP) opposition party. His arrest, in the capital Malabo, followed the publication of a communique on the Internet signed by him and published by Laurentino Nsué Mibuy, another UP member in exile in Spain. The communique criticized the government for cancelling a salary increase for civil servants which had been announced at the beginning of the year.

Following his imprisonment he was reportedly severely tortured on several occasions, sustaining broken wrists, for which he received no treatment.

After a reportedly unfair trial in July he was sentenced to one year in prison. The same trial convicted Laurentino Nsué Mibuy, in his absence, of defamation and slander, and sentenced him to two years and four months in prison and to pay a hefty fine.

Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of prisoner of conscience Fabián Nsué Nguema Obono and for the allegations of torture to be investigated. Call for the sentence passed on Laurentino Nsué Mibuy to be annulled.

Send appeals to: General Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic, Gabinete del Presidente de la República, Malabo, Republic of Equatorial Guinea. Fax +240 9 3313/3334.

France

Allegations of racial abuse and physical assault by police

Karim Latifi claims he was racially abused and physically assaulted by police officers in February to the extent that he was unable to return to work for 15 days.

According to Karim Latifi, he was driving to a family dinner in Paris when he found his way blocked by several police cars. When he asked what was happening, an

officer told him to mind his own business in an insultingly familiar way.

When asked for his identity papers he gave them to the officers to examine. One officer then pushed him on to a staircase, calling him a “dirty Arab”. He says that about 15 police officers then hit him with truncheons, punched and kicked him. His face began to swell up and he was on the point of losing consciousness. He also claims that he was forced to lick the wall.

Karim Latifi was then handcuffed and driven to the central police station. He says the police continued to racially abuse him in the car. He was held at the police station for 15 minutes and was then released without charge by an officer not involved in the assault.

Karim Latifi has lodged an official complaint with the police inspectorate, and the public prosecutor of Paris has also opened a preliminary inquiry.

Please write, calling for a prompt, thorough and impartial police and judicial investigation into the alleged assault and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Send appeals to: M. Nicolas Sarkozy, Ministre de l’Intérieur, de la Sécurité et des Libertés Locales, Ministère de l’Intérieur, Place Beauvau, 75008 Paris, France.

Fax:+33 1 43 59 89 50

e-mail: sirp@cybercable.fr

Israel/Occupied Territories

Fear of unlawful transfer

Intisar 'Ajuri was arrested at her home in Askar refugee camp near Nablus, on 4 June 2002. Her hands were bound and she was taken away. She has never been arrested before. She was sentenced to six months’ administrative detention on 6 June 2002. At first her family did not know where she had been taken. Eventually, on 13 June, the Attorney General revealed that Intisar was being held at Neve Tirza prison. She is the only woman in administrative detention.

Administrative detention allows detainees to be held without charge or trial. The detention order, which states that Intisar 'Ajuri is a threat to the security of the area but offers no proof to substantiate this claim, is indefinitely renewable.

On 20 July the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) destroyed the 'Ajuri family home in Nablus, saying that Intisar’s brother, 'Ali, had helped to ambush an Israeli bus near Emmanuel settlement in the West Bank, killing nine people. 'Ali 'Ajuri was extrajudicially executed by the IDF on 6 August. Now the IDF is threatening to unlawfully transfer Intisar and her brother Kifah 'Ajuri to Gaza. Intisar is now being held in the Moscobiya Detention Centre in Jerusalem and allegedly subjected to torture or other ill-treatment including beating, sleep deprivation and sexual harassment.

Please write, saying that if Intisar 'Ajuri has committed a recognizably criminal offence she should be charged and brought to trial in a proper court of law in accordance with internationally accepted standards for fair trial. Otherwise she should be immediately released. Also ask that she should not be unlawfully transferred. The Israeli authorities should end the punitive demolition of homes and refrain from unlawfully transferring Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.

Send appeals to: Ariel Sharon, Prime Minister and Minister of Immigration
Absorption, Office of the Prime Minister, 3 Kaplan Street, PO Box 187, Kiryat Ben
Gurion, Jerusalem 91919, Israel. Fax: +972 2 651 2631

e-mail: rohm@pmo.gov.il

STOP PRESS

LIBERIA: Hassan Bility, an independent journalist and human rights defender, has
been detained incommunicado since 24 June. AI fears his life could be in danger.
Please send appeals for information about him to: Reginald Goodridge, Minister of
Information, Monrovia, Liberia. For the latest update on his case please check AI's
website: [www.amnesty.org/act now](http://www.amnesty.org/actnow)