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DENMARK: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES CHRISTIANIA INVESTIGATION

Amnesty International welcomes the investigation into 11 cases of ill-treatment which were alleged to have occurred in the course of a 15-month police operation in Christiania in 1992/3.

The report of this investigation highlights concerns raised in Amnesty International's June 1994 report on alleged police ill-treatment, including repetitive instances in which people detained by the police were placed face-down on the ground and handcuffed behind their backs. In some cases the handcuffs were so tight that the people lost feeling in their hands and some were placed in the "fixed leg-lock", which Amnesty International considered to be extremely painful, dangerous and amounting to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.

"In releasing our report in 1994, we hoped to highlight concerns and contribute to the solutions," Amnesty International said. "The release of today's report is the latest stage in the debate on policing practice, and we are confident that the issues raised by the prosecutor will be addressed by the government."

Amnesty International has welcomed many of the initiatives taken to date by the Government aimed at preventing instances of ill-treatment in the future. Such initiatives include:

- suspension of the use of the "fixed leg-lock"
- issuing instructions to police to monitor the pulse and respiration of any person restrained face down in the manual leg-lock
- initiation of a wide-ranging review of the restraint and self-defence methods used by the police,
- payment of compensation to people found to have suffered police ill-treatment
- initiation of investigations into individual allegations of police ill-treatment

"We hope the information contained in the Regional Prosecutor's report will contribute to the ongoing review of police restraint and self-defence methods, and will lead to changes in police regulations, training, equipment and practice," Amnesty International said.

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