



Torture in Turkey

Widespread and systematic torture committed with impunity

When police raided an office of the Human Rights Foundation of Turkey in September 2001, seizing all its records, the search warrant labelled the treatment of torture victims an "illegal activity".

Illegal activity in Turkey is widespread – torture by the police and security forces. Virtually anyone in police custody is at risk. Parliamentary investigators have discovered sound-proofed interrogation rooms specially equipped for torture in police stations.

"If I note torture wounds I will be tortured myself", a doctor was reported to have told one of a group of 20 people arrested and tortured in March 2000 in imak police headquarters. When, after 10 days, the group was taken to Mardin Prison, the prison director would not accept them because of their injuries.

People in police custody are routinely blindfolded to prevent them from identifying their torturers. Many are badly beaten. Many are stripped naked, subjected to sexual abuse, electric shocks, hanging by the arms, and deprivation of sleep, food, drink and use of the toilet. Psychological torture includes death threats and threats of rape. When police expect a detainee to be released soon, they use techniques that do not normally leave marks such as spraying with cold water.

Incommunicado detention is a key factor for torture: political detainees are deprived of access to lawyers, family, friends and doctors. Guidelines on registering detainees and notifying their families are often ignored, creating distress for relatives and encouraging torture and "disappearance".

Lawyers, human rights defenders and some prosecutors all agree that torture persists because forced confessions, subsequently admitted as evidence in court, play a major role in the investigation of crimes.

While torture mainly takes place in police custody, it reportedly also occurs in prisons (particularly the new high-security "F-type" prisons) and during transfers to and from prisons.

Many factors contribute to impunity for torturers in Turkey. Victims and relatives are frequently terrified into silence, and when they do speak out, prosecutors are very reluctant to respond to complaints and evidence of ill-treatment and torture.

The failure of Turkish officials to investigate allegations of torture not only allows torturers to go unpunished, but contributes to the unfair trial of the victim, and in some cases is the direct cause of miscarriages of justice.

See AI report, *Turkey: An end to torture and impunity is overdue!* (AI Index: EUR 44/072/2001).



The families of Serdar Tani and Ebubekir Deniz, two members of the legal pro-Kurdish party HADEP who "disappeared" in January 2001. They are holding copies of Urgent Actions issued by AI.



Two boys carry a sack of mud to be sieved for diamonds at the Kabuebue mine, Democratic Republic of the Congo, May 2001

The true cost of diamonds

To many people, diamonds symbolize love, happiness or wealth. However, for many others, they mean conflict, misery and poverty. In African countries such as Angola, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Sierra Leone, the profits from the unregulated diamond trade are used to fund armed conflicts. As a result, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or tortured and millions have been displaced.

As many as two million people, many of them living in and around mining areas, have been displaced by armed forces during the armed conflict in DRC; many have died from starvation, exposure and lack of treatment for diseases contracted while hiding from armed gunmen. AI estimates that thousands, possibly tens of thousands, of unarmed civilians have been deliberately and arbitrarily killed by armed forces involved in the conflict since August 1998. The diamond trade in the DRC has been a major factor in the armed conflict, which involves at least six foreign government armies and many armed political groups. A UN panel of experts, in its report of April 2001, said that "the conflict in the [DRC] has become mainly about access, control and trade of five key mineral resources: coltan, diamonds, copper, cobalt and gold."

During the three decades of civil war in Angola, the armed political group UNITA has used profits from diamonds to obtain weapons. The weapons are used to sustain UNITA's fight against the Angolan government and contribute to human rights abuses, including killing and mutilating civilians. UN sanctions imposed on UNITA in

1998 make it illegal to buy diamonds from UNITA or to sell them weapons. However, although UNITA's diamond trade has been reduced it has not been stopped – and killing, torture and abduction continue.

Diamonds have also been a key factor in fuelling the armed conflict in Sierra Leone. The rebel group Revolutionary United Front (RUF) has led a campaign of terror against civilians since 1991, including killings, rape and mutilation. The RUF has controlled the diamond-producing areas of the country and has used the money from diamond sales to procure weapons and other military assistance. The Sierra Leonean government has already put in place a UN-approved certification system for diamond exports. However, controls are still needed within the country to track diamonds from the point they are mined.

The Liberian government has been consistently accused of breaking UN embargoes by trading in diamonds from RUF areas of Sierra Leone and by giving military assistance to the RUF. In Liberia itself, civilians also suffer human rights abuses by government forces and armed groups in the north of the country. Although very few diamonds come from Liberia, the government has been accused of using the profits from the diamond trade with the RUF to finance weapons purchases.

Over the past two years, the diamond industry, some governments and international bodies such as the UN have begun to take steps towards ending the deadly trade in "conflict diamonds". However, progress has been too slow and further delays could mean more people killed, tortured or abducted.

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Daring to raise their voices

Human rights defenders persecuted in Mexico



Digna Ochoa y Plácido

On 19 October 2001, the body of leading human rights lawyer Digna Ochoa y Plácido was found at her office in the centre of Mexico City. She had been shot dead. A note was left by her body, threatening that her colleagues would suffer the same fate if they continued their human rights work.

Until last year, Digna Ochoa had worked for many years with the Miguel Agustín Pro Juárez Human Rights Centre on cases in which public officials had been implicated in serious human rights violations. As a result of this work she suffered years of death threats, assaults

and intimidation. None of these incidents were investigated effectively. Al believes that had the Mexican authorities taken appropriate action to ensure that previous incidents were properly investigated, her life might have been saved.

Digna Ochoa's killing was not an isolated incident but an extreme example of a widespread pattern of persecution of human rights defenders in Mexico. State agents at all levels have been implicated in a wide range of abuses including torture and ill-treatment, attempted killings and threats. The majority of such cases of harassment of human rights defenders go uninvestigated and unresolved.

In one case, Israel Ochoa, a human rights lawyer, was detained on 5 September 1996 by the federal judicial police. He was held overnight, beaten and interrogated. Israel Ochoa told Al that his abductors simulated his execution by putting a pistol to his head and firing blank shots. Others, such as members of the Fray Bartolomé de Las Casas Human Rights Centre, have been ambushed and attacked while attempting to carry out human rights work.

Spurious criminal charges, public smear campaigns and surveillance operations have been tactics widely used by the authorities to silence human rights organizations and individual defenders. Some human rights defenders have been sentenced and imprisoned on fabricated charges for the sole purpose of halting their campaign work. One case that reached international headlines is that of Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera. The two ecologists were detained on 2 May 1999 as a result of their campaign against excessive logging operations in the state of Guerrero which they claim threaten the environment and livelihood of local peasant communities. While held incommunicado by the military, the men were tortured to force them to sign self-incriminating confessions. They were subsequently charged with drugs and firearms related crimes and sentenced to six and 10 years' imprisonment respectively.

Thanks to national and international pressure on their case, Rodolfo Montiel and Teodoro Cabrera were released on 8 November 2001. However, the authorities have made no moves to recognize the men's innocence, nor to investigate the torture and ill-treatment that they suffered during their detention. This is typical of the way the Mexican authorities tolerate the continued harassment and ill-treatment of human rights defenders, taking limited or insufficient action to deter or condemn such acts or to punish those responsible. In so doing, the authorities acquiesce in covering up human rights violations.

On 1 December 2000 a new federal government, headed by President Vicente Fox Quesada, took office and pledged to improve the human rights situation in Mexico. Digna Ochoa's killing highlights the failure of the new government to deliver on that pledge.

For more information, see Al's report, *Mexico: Daring to raise their voices* (Al Index: AMR 41/040/2001) published on 10 December 2001.

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AI, along with dozens of other organizations, is calling for decisive and immediate action to control the diamond trade. Action is needed at both the international and national levels. All countries involved in the mining, movement and processing of rough diamonds must agree to minimum international standards, and these must be open to international scrutiny. Diamonds must be monitored from the mine to the point of export and throughout the trading and manufacturing process in other countries. Proof of origin is essential to reassure the consumer that they are not contributing to human rights abuses.

Discussions between governments, the diamond industry and other organizations is ongoing, under the "Kimberly process". These aim to design a certification system in time for a discussion at the UN General Assembly in December 2001. Governments must meet the deadline and implement an effective and transparent system as soon as possible. The diamond industry must also support these controls at all levels and help implement them by putting their moral obligation before profit.

See <http://web.amnesty.org/diamonds.html>

North Africa: attempts to silence human rights defenders

In May 2001 the Supreme State Security Court in Cairo, Egypt, sentenced prominent human rights defender Saad Eddin Ibrahim, head of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies (IKCDS), to seven years' imprisonment. He was convicted of receiving funds without authorization, dissemination of false information abroad and fraud, in connection with European Union funded projects aimed at raising political awareness. Three other staff members of the IKCDS were sentenced to two years' imprisonment in the same trial. The charges against Ibrahim and his colleagues were politically motivated and a pretext to punish them for the exercise of their right to freedom of expression.

In a joint statement, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary General on Human Rights Defenders and the UN Special Rapporteur on the independence of judges and lawyers stated that the conviction "will have a chilling effect on the activities of human rights defenders in Egypt".



Human rights defender Saad Eddin Ibrahim

In a recent visit to Tunisia, two AI delegates experienced at first hand the reality of police harassment that is part of daily life for most human rights defenders in the country.

On the evening of 28 September, a car driving the delegates to their hotel was stopped by police officers. The delegates were forced into an unmarked car and taken to a secluded street, where they were physically assaulted and their equipment and documents confiscated. The documents they were carrying have not been returned to them.

The delegates were visiting Tunisia to attend the trials of human rights defender Dr Moncef Marzouki, who has been harassed for years because of his outspoken criticism of Tunisia's human rights record. At the appeal hearing, his one-year prison term was suspended, but he has been deprived of his right to vote or stand as a candidate in elections for the next five years.

In Morocco, 36 human rights defenders were sentenced to three months' imprisonment and fined for organizing an "unauthorized demonstration" on 9 December 2000. The demonstration was organized by the Moroccan Association of Human Rights to demand justice for victims of human rights violations in previous decades, and to call for an end to impunity for those responsible. All are currently at liberty awaiting the outcome of their appeal.

In Algeria, pending defamation charges against human rights defender Mohamed Smain are being used to curtail his activities after he publicly denounced the involvement of local state-armed militia in "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions.

These cases in Egypt, Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia highlight a disturbing pattern of repression of human rights defenders in North Africa. Al has strongly condemned the imprisonment and other harassment of those who stand up for the rights of others. Governments must uphold their obligation to ensure that human rights defenders can work freely without interference and harassment.

Persecution of Peace Prize winner continues in Myanmar

A decade of political imprisonment in Myanmar highlighted by Nobel Peace Prize anniversary

On 8 December 2001 more than 30 Nobel Peace Prize laureates will meet at a symposium in Oslo to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Nobel Prize. Yet one of the most well-known winners of the prize, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, head of the National League for Democracy (NLD), Myanmar's main opposition party, will be unable to attend.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was awarded the Prize 10 years ago, at a time when she was under house arrest and hundreds of political activists throughout Myanmar were imprisoned. On the anniversary of her receiving the Prize, it is likely that she will again be under house arrest, and that many of the opposition activists who were imprisoned 10 years ago will still be in detention. While Aung San Suu Kyi was released from six years of house arrest in 1995, her movement was severely restricted by the authorities, and she was put under *de facto* house arrest for a second time in September 2000.

Myanmar has one of the highest numbers of prisoners of conscience in the world. At least 1,600 political prisoners are detained in the country, serving sentences of between two years' and life imprisonment. Scores of student leaders and activists, members of parliament elect, NLD party members, and suspected members of other opposition parties have either remained in prison throughout the last decade, or are serving new prison terms of between seven and 30 years for engaging in peaceful political activities. Many, including students arrested for demonstrating in support of Aung San Suu Kyi receiving the Nobel Peace Prize, have not been released at the end of their prison sentence and continue to be held under administrative detention laws that allow imprisonment on executive order without charge or trial.

Prisoners have received further prison terms while in prison, for example for allegedly attempting to contact the UN about

prison conditions in the country, and attempting to circulate news and written materials in the prison.

Although 2001 has seen the highest number of releases of political prisoners in Myanmar for several years, many of those released had reached the end of their prison terms, or had been held without charge or trial for months or even years.

On release, many prisoners continue to have their rights to freedom of expression and association restricted and have to sign pledges not to engage in politics. Two comedians who had been serving a sentence for their comic performance at an NLD meeting were released in July. According to reports, since their release they have been prohibited from performing.



Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and senior members of the NLD speaking to crowds outside her residence in 1996

REMEMBER...AI members should not take up cases from their own countries

worldwide appeals

TURKEY

Eleven shepherds tortured



Nine of the 11 shepherds arrested in Uak

Eleven shepherds were arrested at night from their homes in the province of Uşak by gendarmes on 23 January. The arrest was based on an anonymous complaint that they had stolen sheep five years earlier.

They were released four days later. They said that they had been blindfolded and handcuffed from the moment of their arrest. They stated that they were heavily beaten and forced to sit on a very cold concrete floor, having been stripped of their trousers and underpants. Two of them reported that they had been exposed to *falaka* (beating on the soles of the feet), two said that their sexual organs were squeezed and another that he had been given electric shocks.

They were also threatened with other forms of torture. When they were brought, with their eyes blindfolded and their hands chained, to the local hospital the morning after their arrest, the doctors allegedly did not examine them properly and did not note their complaints.

After their release they filed formal complaints against the gendarmes and the doctors. With the support of human rights organizations, four of them were medically examined and the Medical Chamber in Izmir concluded in their report that the medical and psychiatric results corroborate the torture allegations. However, the shepherds cannot afford to leave their sheep unattended while they seek justice.

➔ Please write, calling on the Turkish authorities to uphold their obligations under domestic and international law to bring an end to torture and ill-treatment in detention; initiate independent and thorough investigations into the alleged torture of the 11 shepherds in Uak; and bring to justice all those responsible.

Send appeals to: Professor Dr Hikmet Sami Türk, Minister of Justice, Adalet Bakanı, Adalet Bakanligi, 06659 Ankara, Turkey. Fax: +90 312 417 3954/418 5667

MYANMAR

Freedom of speech penalized



Win Htein (pictured), aged 53, is serving a 14-year prison sentence. He is a senior assistant to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of Myanmar's main opposition party, and was arrested during a crack-down on the party in the summer of 1996, when scores of party supporters were sentenced to prison terms. In August 1996 he and four others were sentenced to seven years' imprisonment. He was charged with arranging for his co-defendants to make a video of dry rice fields to send to the UN

Commission on Human Rights. Eleven days later he was sentenced to a further seven years' imprisonment after a second trial. He was accused of arranging for a former student prisoner to be interviewed by a foreign journalist about the torture of political prisoners.

Both trials failed to meet internationally recognized standards of fairness. According to unofficial sources, officers arresting Win Htein told him that they did not need a warrant because his prison sentence had already been decided.

This is the third time since 1989 that Win Htein has been detained for his peaceful political activities. During his previous imprisonment he was tortured. Over a period of 27 days, he was deprived of water, made to kneel on the floor for up to five days, and then to lie on his front, handcuffed and with a hood over his head. He was subsequently held in solitary confinement and for two years and eight months he was not allowed either to leave his cell or to receive visits from his family. He contracted inflammation of the vertebrae, high blood pressure and migraines, for which he requires medical treatment, and also has difficulty walking.

➔ Please write, urging the immediate and unconditional release of U Win Htein and that pending his release he be given adequate medical care.

Send appeals to: Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1, State Peace and Development Council, c/o Ministry of Defence, Ahlanpya Phaya Street, Yangon, Union of Myanmar. Fax: c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs, +95 1 549 642.

USA

Racist application of the death penalty



Thomas Miller-El is due to be executed in Texas on 21 February 2002. He was convicted in 1986 of the murder of a white man, Douglas Walker, during a robbery.

Thomas Miller-El, an African American, was one of 15 men sentenced to death in Dallas County between 1980 and 1986. Of the 180 jurors at their trials, only five were African American. Using peremptory challenges – the right to reject prospective jurors during jury selection without giving a reason – prosecutors dismissed 56 of the 57 other blacks qualified to serve.

Of the 15 cases, five involved African American defendants. All except Miller-El were tried by all white juries.

His jury consisted of 11 whites and one black, after the prosecution used 10 peremptory challenges against African Americans.

The only black accepted on to the jury was a man who said of execution: "It's too quick. They don't feel the pain... Pour some honey on them and stake them out over an ant bed... That's what I call punishment".

A training manual for prosecutors still used in the 1980s in Dallas County contained the following advice on jury selection: "You are looking for a strong, stable individual who believes that defendants are different from them in kind". It warned against selecting jurors from minority races, people with "physical afflictions" and Jews, on the grounds that they "usually empathize with the accused".

More than 700 people have been executed in the USA since 1977. In 80 per cent of these cases the crime involved a white victim, even though blacks and whites are the victim of murder in almost equal numbers. In August, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination noted the "disturbing correlation" between race, of both victim and defendant, in capital sentencing in the USA. It urged the USA to ensure that "no death penalty is imposed as a result of racial bias".

➔ Please send appeals, calling for clemency for Thomas Miller-El, to: Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles, P.O. Box 13401, Austin, TX 78711-3401, USA. Fax: +1 512 463 8120, and to: Governor Rick Perry, State Capitol, PO Box 12428, Austin, TX 78711, USA. Fax: +1 512 463 1849

Ten states needed to ratify Protocol 12

Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights, which guarantees that no one shall be discriminated against by any public authority, was opened for signature by the member states of the Council of Europe on 4 November 2000. It will enter into force after 10 states have ratified or acceded to it. Twenty-seven states have signed the Protocol so far, but only one state – Georgia – has ratified it.

If your country is a member of the Council of Europe, please write to your Foreign Minister, calling on your government to ratify Protocol No. 12 to the European Convention on Human Rights, pointing out that in doing so the government will be taking an important step in protecting the right to be free from discrimination.

WORLDWIDE APPEAL UPDATES

ANGOLA

João Zaba was conditionally released from prison on 24 September after serving just over six months of his sentence. He is a former employee of the World Bank and was serving a nine-month prison sentence for publishing an article on the Internet supporting independence for Cabinda, an Angolan enclave. See *The Wire*, October 2001.

VIETNAM

On 19 October, **Father Thadeus Nguyen Van Ly** was sentenced to a total of 15 years' imprisonment, plus five years' probation on release, after a trial lasting only half a day. The accusations against him included "defying an administration order of confinement issued by a state agency and undermining the unity policy" under vaguely worded provisions of national security legislation used to criminalize peaceful dissent. Having previously spent 10 years in prison, Father Ly now faces another long term of imprisonment solely for the peaceful expression of his dissenting political and religious beliefs. AI is calling for his immediate and unconditional release. See *The Wire*, September 2001.

SECRETARY GENERAL OF AI GAMBIA
DETAINED

Mohamed Lamin Sillah, Secretary General of AI Gambia, was arrested and held incommunicado in the Gambian capital, Banjul, from 22 to 26 October. He said that although he was not ill-treated the detention conditions were very poor. He was officially only released on bail, despite not having been charged with any offence. AI is concerned that this is a symptom of a wider attack on freedom of expression and human rights defenders in Gambia.

CONFERENCE ON SMALL ARMS IN KENYA

The Humanitarian Coalition on Small Arms, a coalition of human rights, humanitarian, health and development non-governmental organizations, held a conference in Nairobi in November. AI was involved in the preparation and AI members from many countries took part in this conference to discuss the challenges and opportunities raised in undertaking research, advocacy and campaigning on small arms.

UN CONCERN ABOUT TORTURE IN UKRAINE

Ukraine's recent exposure to international scrutiny revealed a number of disturbing human rights violations in the country, particularly in relation to torture and press freedom. In mid-October in Geneva the UN Human Rights Committee expressed concern about "the persistence of widespread use of torture" by law enforcement officials in Ukraine. The reported intimidation and harassment of journalists and human rights defenders, including AI's Ukraine Association, were also causes for concern.



Amnesty International
International Secretariat
Peter Benenson House
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 0DW
United Kingdom
www.amnesty.org
email: newslett@amnesty.org
subscriptions:
ppmsteam@amnesty.org

What future for Afghanistan?

AI promotes a human rights agenda



Children in a camp in northern Afghanistan try to warm themselves as winter approaches, October 2001

No one knows how long the US-led military action in Afghanistan will continue, or how it will end, but there are already discussions about the political future for Afghanistan after the conflict.

It is essential that the international community puts human rights at the core of such discussions. Peace and security can never be ensured unless human rights guarantees are central to a political settlement. AI is therefore promoting a human rights agenda for

Afghanistan. Any political settlement must be based on broad consultation and participation by the widest possible cross section of Afghan society, and must ensure the full protection and meaningful participation of women and all religious and ethnic groups. The development of institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights is essential to any national reconstruction.

There must be explicit guarantees of an end to human rights

abuses such as unlawful killings, including reprisal killings based on ethnic identity, arbitrary detention and torture.

Systematic discrimination and violence against women must be ended and full respect for their human rights ensured.

Foreign governments must ensure that any supplies of arms or other military assistance are not used to commit human rights abuses. The use of child soldiers must be stopped.

In a post-conflict Afghanistan, there must be a genuine commitment to human rights by those in positions of leadership.

Perpetrators of human rights abuses should be brought to justice in accordance with international fair trial standards – mechanisms for ensuring accountability must be established early in any transition process.

Refugees should be guaranteed protection and countries of asylum should respect the principles of international refugee and human rights law. Humanitarian assistance must be provided in line with the principles of humanity, neutrality and impartiality.

For the people of Afghanistan, this latest crisis is one more chapter in a long history of suffering. During 23 years of armed conflict, consecutive governments have failed to uphold basic human rights and warring factions have committed serious abuses, aided and abetted by foreign states.

The Taliban have killed thousands of civilians in massacres and indiscriminate attacks, sometimes on account of their ethnic origin. They have held prisoners without charge or trial, many of them prisoners of conscience, and have used torture. Women's rights have been severely restricted; they are not allowed to move freely outside the home and are denied their right to education. In early November the Taliban summarily executed a

number of opponents, including Abdul Haq, a supporter of King Mohammad Zahir Shah.

Forces of the anti-Taliban alliance, the United Front, have killed, imprisoned and abused civilians on the basis of their ethnic identity or affiliation with the Taliban. Torture and ill-treatment by various factions within the United Front have been reported.

The bombing campaign by the US-led coalition has raised serious concerns about possible breaches of international humanitarian law. AI has urged the US military to strengthen measures to ensure that civilians are not killed as a result of their military action, and has called for a halt to the use of cluster bombs.

Today, Afghans face not only continuing human rights abuses but mass starvation. After decades of conflict and years of drought, the air strikes and Taliban restrictions have disrupted the delivery of aid into Afghanistan.

Solutions to the crisis cannot be imposed from the outside – the future of Afghanistan must be decided by the Afghan people. The UN has a major facilitation role and the human rights agenda should be at the centre of all efforts to resolve the conflict and rebuild Afghanistan.

See *Afghanistan: Making Human Rights the Agenda* (AI Index: ASA 11/023/2001)

AI takes steps to stamp out torture

Assessing the impact of the campaign

In October 2000 AI launched a global campaign against torture. Under the rallying cry, TAKE A STEP TO STAMP OUT TORTURE, AI members throughout the world took up the challenge, lobbying governments, intervening on behalf of people at risk of torture, appealing on behalf of hundreds of individual survivors and victims, and staging a host of events and activities aimed at bringing a permanent end to torture.

The campaign goes on, but after one year, the results are already showing that through a concerted effort of dedicated, imaginative and forceful campaigning, AI can make a difference.

More than 30,000 people from 188 countries have signed up to participate in anti-torture actions through www.stoptorture.org, AI's award-winning campaigning website. The subscribers are notified within hours of AI learning of any case involving torture or fear of torture. On average between 2,500 and 10,000 people send e-mail or text message appeals on behalf of the people whose cases are publicized on the site.

Out of 18 Urgent Actions posted on the website, featuring 79 detainees in Brazil, China, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ecuador, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Malaysia, Mexico, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates, 32 were released from detention or saved from torture or imminent extrajudicial execution.

One of the key objectives of the campaign against torture is to put pressure on governments to ratify the UN Convention against Torture without reservations. A year after the launch seven more countries have ratified the Convention, and four more have signed it.

In its fight against impunity for torturers, AI has been campaigning hard for governments to ratify the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. Only 17 ratifications are now needed to bring the Statute into force, and it is expected that this target will be achieved in the next three to six months.

An important goal was achieved in April when 15 European Union (EU) foreign ministers gave the green light to EU guidelines on the prevention

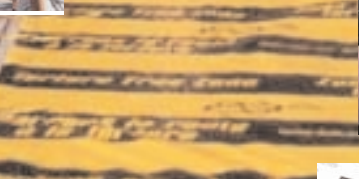
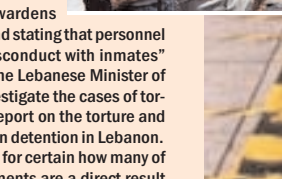
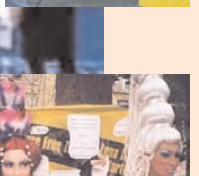
of torture in third countries, marking a significant advance for EU human rights policy.

AI members lobbied governments throughout the world to establish legislation and national bodies against torture. In the UK, a step was taken towards a ban on the brokering of torture equipment with the first reading in Parliament of the Strategic Export Controls Bill. Indonesia has adopted legislation recognizing that torture can be a crime against humanity. The President of Senegal has established a Human Rights office to tackle the issue of torture in the country, while the Parliament of the Russian Federation has set up a joint working group with the Council of Europe to fight torture in Chechnya.

Shortly after the publication of AI's report on rape and sexual abuse of women prisoners in the Philippines, prison authorities issued a memo to jail wardens referring to the report and stating that personnel engaged in "sexual misconduct with inmates" would be prosecuted. The Lebanese Minister of Justice promised to investigate the cases of torture mentioned in AI's report on the torture and ill-treatment of women in detention in Lebanon.

It is impossible to say for certain how many of these positive developments are a direct result of the work of AI's supporters, but it is clear that the campaign against torture is having an effect.

Congratulations to everybody who has taken part. Keep up the good work, and take another step to stamp out torture!



Around the world, AI mobilizes its supporters to promote the campaign against torture
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