

Germany - Web Action 0204

EUR 23/003/2004

1. Title

Germany: Back in the spotlight

2. Extract

While allegations of police ill-treatment of detainees persist, so does Germany's reluctance to open itself to greater scrutiny. Change is long overdue.

3. Summary

Despite receiving continuing allegations of police ill-treatment of detainees, Germany has refused to bow to repeated international pressure to establish an independent mechanism to investigate all incidents of serious police misconduct.

Such allegations have included police officers kicking, punching and kneeling detainees and painfully twisting their arms behind their backs and tugging their handcuffed hands. Some victims of alleged police ill-treatment suffered injuries so serious that they were hospitalized. Regrettably, a significant proportion of allegations have continued to come from foreign nationals or members of ethnic minorities. In the absence of any uniform and comprehensive official figures on complaints about ill-treatment by police officers the true magnitude of the phenomenon in Germany is known to no one.

Amnesty International believes that there is still much more Germany can do to ensure that police officers who ill-treat detainees are brought to account. Put alleged police ill-treatment firmly back on Germany's political agenda and call on the authorities to implement long awaited change.

4. Recommended action

Urge Federal Minister of the Interior Otto Schily in a letter, fax or an email to establish an independent body to monitor and investigate instances of alleged police ill-treatment. You could base your letter on the sample below.

5. Sample letter

Dear Minister,

I am very much concerned by the cases of alleged police misconduct highlighted in the recent Amnesty International report, *Back in the Spotlight: Allegations of police ill-treatment and excessive use of force in Germany*. The report highlights numerous cases of alleged police ill-treatment. I find it particularly disturbing that investigations into complaints of police ill-treatment can take many months, often years, and only occasionally have accused police officers been brought to justice. In certain cases the victims suffered serious injury as a result of their alleged ill-treatment, which also often had much longer-term effects on them and their families, physically, emotionally and financially.

You will appreciate that these concerns have also in the past been shared by expert bodies of the United Nations (UN) and Council of Europe. These bodies urged Germany to establish an independent body with effective powers to monitor and investigate complaints of serious

police misconduct, including ill-treatment. Regrettably, Germany has not acted on these recommendations to date.

In view of the concerns highlighted in Amnesty International's report it is clear that Germany must redouble its efforts to prevent and penalize instances of police ill-treatment. I therefore urge you to immediately act on Amnesty International's recommendations and establish an independent body to monitor and investigate instances of alleged police ill-treatment.

Yours sincerely,

6. Contact details

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Germany
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8. Related documents

- *Back in the Spotlight: Allegations of police ill-treatment and excessive use of force in Germany* (AI Index: EUR 23/001/2004);
- AI Annual Report 2003, AI Index POL 10/001/2003;
- Entries on Germany from *Concerns in Europe*:
January-June 2003, AI Index: EUR 01/016/2003.

9. Photo caption:

A police officer looking out on a demonstration in Cologne held in memory of Stephan Neisius who died in hospital in late May 2002 after being ill-treated by police. © AP

10. Email to stop torture list

[Title]

StopTorture: Put Germany in the human rights spotlight

[Body – same as 3.Summary above]

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[Take action title]

TAKE ACTION!

[Take action body]

Urge Federal Minister of the Interior Otto Schily to establish an establish an independent body to monitor and investigate instances of alleged police ill-treatment.

[Act now link]

Act now