

all four were being held in Tora prison in Cairo and subjected to beatings and lashing. The government did not reply to the appeal.

Independence of judges and lawyers, Special Rapporteur on the: (E/CN.4/1998/39, paras. 15, 19, 65–67)

An urgent appeal was sent by the Special Rapporteur (SR) with regard to the arrest of the same two lawyers in the case addressed by the Special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression. The report also notes the case of a lawyer from the Egyptian Organization of Human Rights (EOHR) who was arrested at Cairo airport allegedly in connection with his peaceful activities in opposition to Law 96. Information indicated that: he was held for two days in three different detention centres without charges being brought against him; he was finally interrogated in the presence of defence lawyers at the State Security Prosecution Office; before being transferred to Mazra'at Tora prison, he was held in al-Mahkoum prison in Tora where he was said to have been ill-treated; and he has been charged with verbally promoting ideas which contradict the fundamental principles of the ruling regime.

The government replied to the cases of the first two lawyers, stating that: they had both conducted premeditated and organized agitation instigating farmers to oppose by force the implementation of Law 96 of 1992 on tenancy agreements in regard to agricultural land; both were arrested by order of the Public Prosecutor following a search of their residence where printed material calling for opposition by force to the Law was found; and while imprisoned in the Tora penitentiary, they attacked some military police working in the prison. With regard to the lawyer from the EOHR, the government stated that he had been arrested at Cairo airport trying to escape an arrest warrant issued by the Public Prosecutor for the same reasons as in the case of the other two lawyers. According to the government, nothing in the facts related to the three cases was connected to their profession as lawyers, and all of their rights during investigation and detention were fully respected.

Religious intolerance, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/6, paras. 48, 50, 62, 96)

The report refers to violations of freedom of religion and belief against Christianity and, with regard to the freedom to change one's religion, noted the case of a Muslim who had converted to Christianity and was reportedly arrested and interrogated in order to force him to give information about the activities of converts.

Torture, Special Rapporteur on: (E/CN.4/1998/38, paras. 89–93; E/CN.4/1998/38/Add.1, paras. 90–114)

The report notes that information was still being received indicating that: torture of persons detained for political reasons continued to take place on a systematic basis; the use of torture against persons detained in ordinary criminal cases occurred frequently; torture was carried out in the State Security Investigations Department (SSI) head-

quarters in Lazoghly Square, SSI branches throughout the country, police stations and Firaq al-Amn (security brigades), where detainees were said to be held incommunicado; methods of torture included the administration of electric shocks, beatings, suspension by the wrists or ankles, burning the body with cigarettes, threats of rape or sexual abuse to the detainee or to female relatives; conditions of a number of prisons were extremely poor; and generally the prison system was said to be characterized by the use of torture and other ill-treatment as a means of discipline and punishment, the prevalence of contagious diseases such as tuberculosis, lack of adequate medical care for prisoners, and bans on visits from relatives and lawyers.

The Special Rapporteur (SR) referred to particular allegations in respect of the High Security Prison (Al-Aqrab or the Scorpion), which stated that: prisoners received insufficient quantities of food; the food received was typically served from filthy buckets and often infested with insects; tuberculosis was widespread inside the prison; prisoners requiring hospitalization or specialized tests such as x-rays were denied access to such medical care, even upon the recommendation of the prison doctor; and according to a decision taken by the Minister of the Interior in December 1993, the prison was considered "closed", meaning that visits of families and relatives are banned. The Administrative Court had issued five rulings cancelling the closing decision but the Ministry of the Interior did not comply with any of them; and, torture and ill-treatment of prisoners was widespread at the High Security Prison. The report also notes that inmates were said to undergo "reception parties" at Fayyom Prison upon entering.

The SR communicated to the government nine newly reported cases, some of them collective, on behalf of 12 individuals and a group of 100 prisoners. Follow-up information was also sought on two previous cases involving 53 individuals, and a number of allegations were retransmitted involving situations to which a reply had not been received. An urgent appeal also raised the case of a group of 250 farmers.

The cases taken up by the SR involved arrest, followed by torture and/or ill treatment against, *inter alia*: members of al-Gama'a al Islamiya; an individual accused of stealing a tape recorder from his workplace; a person suspected of having set fire to an effigy of British Marshal Allenby; two people suspected of involvement in a killing; and, an individual who converted from Islam to Christianity, in order to gain information from him about other converts. The SR also took up the case of some 100 prisoners at the high security prison in Cairo who were reportedly subjected to collective punishment by flogging in June 1996, after a watch had been discovered in one inmate's cell and part of a ball-point pen in another.

The government's reply to the cases transmitted in previous years indicated: none of the persons alleged to have been tortured had responded to the summonses from the Assistant Attorney-General's Office for Human Rights,