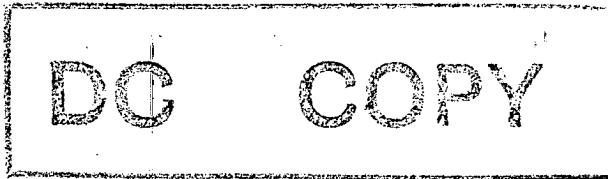


INTERNAL (for AI members only)

AI Index: MDE 13/08/88
Distr: SC/CC/CO



Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

To: All sections
Campaign Coordinators
Coordinators responsible for Iran

From: Campaign and Membership Department

Date: 25 May 1988

IRAN CAMPAIGN: CONCLUDING CIRCULAR

Summary

This circular provides an overview of some of the effects of the Iran campaign by drawing together the responses received by sections and groups; in conjunction with previous circulars it can be used to provide a general summary of the impact of the campaign in Iran. It also gives details of some of the activities undertaken by sections and groups, complementing the earlier circular "Iran Campaign - First Report" (MDE 13/16/87), and some short recommended actions for groups who wish to follow up their campaign activities. It is issued now to accompany the external paper entitled "Iran - Persistent Violations of Human Rights" (MDE 13/07/88).

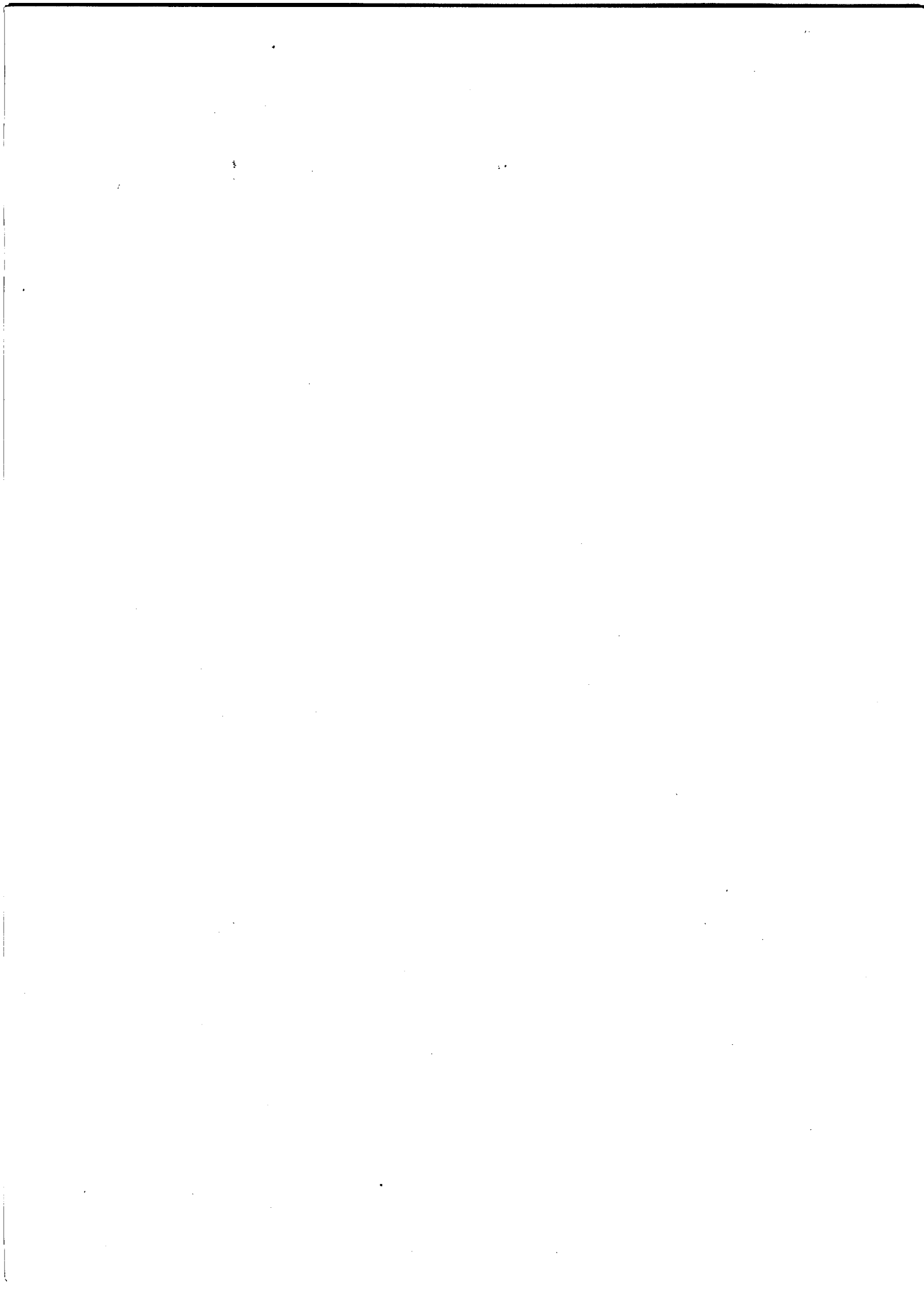
Distribution

As above.

Recommended actions

Please note this circular is internal only.

Sections should make the information in this circular available to all groups which participated in the Iran campaign.



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IRAN CAMPAIGN: CONCLUDING CIRCULAR

1. INTRODUCTION: SUMMARY OF THE STRUCTURE OF THE CAMPAIGN

The Iran campaign began on 13 May and drew to a close at the end of December 1987. It covered a variety of concerns in Iran. The campaign was originally planned to end in September; the decision to extend it was taken following indications of the substantial impact the campaign was having in Iran. During the second phase (mid-September to December), groups and sections were asked to concentrate on the issues of unfair trials and denial of access to Iran to AI and other independent human rights organizations as well as the UN Special Representative on Iran. Unfortunately, during this second phase of the campaign, reports of torture and numerous executions continued to reach us. In the light of the persisting pattern of these particular human rights violations, it was decided to close the campaign with a special week of action (10 to 17 December) in which extra letters were requested specifically on torture and the death penalty. However, we learned through this that most sections cannot handle such calls for a fairly rapid change of focus within a campaign.

More precise details of the rationale behind the different phases of the campaign are contained in the circulars "Iran Campaign - Second Phase" (MDE 13/18/87) and "Iran Campaign - Second Phase Update" (MDE 13/22/87).

Since the close of the campaign, AI has continued to receive reports of serious human rights violations in Iran, including arbitrary arrests and detention of political prisoners, unfair trials, torture and executions, which indicate that its recommendations submitted to the Iranian Government in 1986 have not been implemented. A detailed update of AI's concerns in Iran since the publication of its report in May 1987 are contained in the external paper "Iran - Persistent Violations of Human Rights". The campaign also called for access to be granted to independent human rights organizations. This has not yet been granted.

However, despite this and despite the reports of continuing human rights violations, this campaign did make some major achievements which open a new stage in AI's relations with the Iranian authorities, most noticeably in the unprecedented receipt of replies by some groups, the scale of the debate within Iran and the seriousness with which AI's reports on other countries were handled in the Iranian press. Future activities on Iran will start from a new point and should be able to build on the achievements of this campaign. Another aim of this campaign was to get serious and factual coverage of human rights in Iran. From the few clippings sent by sections to the IS, it appears that this was to some

extent achieved, although sections will have to judge for themselves whether they did make more lasting changes to reporting on Iran's human rights record.

2. REPLIES FROM IRAN

During the course of the campaign, groups in several sections received replies from Iran from a variety of sources, some of which are described in previous circulars and campaign coordinators mailings. To our knowledge, there have been five different replies so far (in addition to replies from embassies). Although none of them specifically address the concerns raised by AI groups about the Iranian Government's human rights record and concentrate instead on making allegations of atrocities committed by Iran's "enemies" and "counter-revolutionaries", nevertheless the replies do show the continuing impact of the campaign in Iran.

The first reply sent to groups directly from Iran was from the General Department of Cultural Affairs and Public Relations of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, on behalf of Hojatolislam Hashemi Rafsanjani, the Speaker of the Assembly. This letter marked a significant step in that it was the first reply from an Iranian authority to any part of AI and came from one of the highest levels of authority in Iran. Groups in Australia, Austria, Denmark, Hong Kong, Japan and Sweden (*) informed us that they had received this letter (in identical form), a copy of which can be found in the circular "Iran Campaign - Advice for Handling Replies" (MDE 13/17/87).

The second reply was from Hamid Naaini, of the Provincial District of Kerman. This letter (reproduced in the circular "Iran Campaign - Second Phase" - MDE 13/18/87)) was rather unusual in that Mr Naaini suggested that AI members invite him to inspect prisons in their own country, and that in return they would be able or allowed to visit Iran. It was sent in identical form to groups in Denmark, FRG, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and the UK. (*) Some of the groups replied to Mr Naaini along the suggested guidelines, and early this year received a second letter from him, in which he reiterated his wish to be invited to their country, in his personal capacity. We advised the relevant sections that if individual groups did choose to invite him, it should be made clear that such visits or meetings would not represent a dialogue between AI and the Iranian Government. We suggested that AI members could arrange for Mr Naaini to attend one of their group meetings, to explain to him the basic function of an AI group, but that such meetings should not be publicized. These basic guidelines were fairly cautious, because although a visit by Mr Naaini could be a good opportunity to establish a contact - if only on a personal level - it could also be used to divert attention from the Iranian Government's failure to respond directly to AI's concerns. To date, we have not heard of any further developments on this front.

Groups in Austria, Denmark, Japan, Netherlands, Sweden and the UK (*) also received a reply from H.Harrandy, of the Governor General Office of Esfahan (copy included in Campaign Coordinators Mailing no.82, sent 4 November 1987). The IS decided not to produce specific guidelines on how to reply to this letter, as its contents did not deal with any of the concerns expressed by AI groups and the earlier advice for replies was valid.

Still more recently (early 1988), groups in Denmark and the Netherlands (*) received a copy of a long letter from Mrs Marzieh Tahereh

Hadidchi-Dabag, a member of the Islamic Consultative Assembly, drawing heavily on her personal experiences. In the case of the Netherlands, the letter was a reply to an approach by the women's target sector group "Women for Peace". Like the previous replies described above, the letter from Mrs Hadidchi-Dabag failed to address the real issues, preferring to make a lengthy attack on Iran's previous rulers, Iraq, and other matters. Any groups receiving this letter should consult the guidelines on how to reply given here in Appendix 1. They may also wish to refer to the excellent reply drafted by a member of a Danish group in response to Mrs Hadidchi-Dabag (Appendix 2).

In February 1988, the Minister of Education, Seyyed Kazem Akrami, replied directly to an AI member in Norway. He described AI's concern as malicious propaganda but expressed a willingness to answer any further questions. A copy of his letter is attached as Appendix 3. Any other groups receiving this letter should consult the guidelines on how to reply attached as Appendix 4.

* These are the only sections which have informed us of replies sent to their groups. Groups in other sections may well have received these letters too but have not notified the IS.

3. SECTION AND GROUP ACTIVITY

The circular "Iran Campaign - First Report", produced in July, contained details of sections' plans for activities for the campaign and of some of the media coverage obtained so far. Since then, we have received more information from some sections about their activities, in particular from Denmark and Japan, who were among a few sections especially chosen for the purpose of evaluating the campaign. Unfortunately, we received only very limited information from other sections which participated in the campaign, and regret that for this reason, feedback is not as full as it should be.

In Denmark, energy was focussed on activities by the groups, while the section concentrated on servicing the groups: the Campaign Group (made up of experienced section members) produced a special background leaflet and a total of 17 different sample letters for groups, covering the whole range of AI's concerns and recommendations in Iran. 95 local groups participated in the campaign. Lawyers groups, medical groups and church groups also undertook some activities, including letter writing. A positive response was received from members of the Danish Parliament. Repeated approaches were made to the Iranian Embassy which however has not yet fulfilled its promise to set up a meeting. However, hundreds of copies of letters from groups to authorities in Iran were sent to the embassy. 14 local groups received responses from Iran (see above), 12 of which replied to them. Some of the responses from Iran were publicized in the local press. Unfortunately, plans to approach Danish companies trading with Iran did not materialize.

In Japan, the main problem seemed to be the lack of interest in Iran among the general public. Despite this obstacle, a total of 25 groups participated in the campaign (more than is usual for a country campaign in Japan) and undertook extensive letter writing. 2000 pre-printed postcards were produced for the second phase of the campaign. Collecting signatures for petitions was particularly successful (a total of 4,400 signatures had

been collected by the end of the campaign). In August, a visit to the Iranian Embassy was organized to present the petitions numbering 3436 signatures collected during the first phase of the campaign. The outcome of the meeting at the embassy was not unusual in that the embassy staff denied all knowledge of the human rights violations reported in AI's publication. The Japanese Section followed up this visit by telephoning the embassy on 18 December to enquire about how they had dealt with the petitions; during this telephone call, the embassy asked the Japanese section to pay another visit as they wished to talk about "other matters" (apparently unrelated to the campaign). To date, no further arrangement has been made.

The Portuguese Section's visit to the embassy in Portugal in June was no more productive: the Ambassador's tone was generally friendly and he did not deny AI's allegations but avoided any detailed discussion of them, preferring to try to justify for example the concept of justice in Iran, stressing the cultural differences between Iran and "Western" countries.

Good press coverage of the campaign continued in many sections. In the US, a final advertisement on the theme of AI's attempts to gain access to Iran was due to appear in the Washington Post in April 1988. In January and February, earlier similar advertisements provoked angry responses from the Iranian Government.

Among the smaller sections (or groups without a section), the work undertaken in Sudan was particularly good: one Sudanese group sent us copies of some excellent petitions they had prepared, signed by members of the legal profession and trade unions, and informed us that they had succeeded in publicizing some of AI's concerns on local television. Groups in Uruguay also sent us copies of letters they had written to the Iranian authorities and to their own government, which were of an equally high standard. In both these countries, the AI membership is very new and this was the first campaign they had ever done. Congratulations to Uruguay and Sudan.

4. FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY

Although the campaign is now officially at an end, AI continues to receive information about continuing human rights violations in Iran. This is given in the external paper "Iran - Persistent Violations of Human Rights" (MDE 13/07/88). Groups who are still interested in pursuing the issues may want to write one last follow-up letter to the two addresses below, making the following points:

- Refer to your previous letter/s to them. Express concern that since that date, you have heard that human rights violations in Iran are continuing on an alarming scale.

- To support this claim, you could mention that AI recorded 158 executions during 1987, over 60 of which were reported to have been carried out during a six-week period between September and October 1987. A more recent example is a report in the Keyhan newspaper in January 1988 of the execution of a 17 year old man who was lashed 50 times before being hanged. Stress that these are events which have occurred since the publication of AI's Report.

- State that the current situation in Iran indicates that AI's

recommendations (submitted to the Iranian Government in 1986) have not been implemented. Urge them to make every effort to institute these safeguards to try to halt the pattern of widespread human rights violations in Iran. You could briefly reiterate AI's recommendations which include: the immediate release of all those imprisoned for the non-violent expression of their beliefs; fair trial procedures in political cases; independent investigations into allegations of torture; an end to torture and judicial punishments which constitute torture or ill-treatment.

- End your letter by reiterating AI's request to the Iranian Government to allow access to Iran to independent human rights organizations.

Addresses

Dr Hassan Habibi
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Park-e Shahr
Palace of Justice
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran

Hojatoleslam Ali Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani
Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly
Islamic Consultative Assembly
Imam Khomeini Avenue
Tehran
Islamic Republic of Iran



APPENDIX 1Advice on how to reply to letter from Mrs Hadidchi-Dabag

Below are guidelines for responding to the main points made by Mrs Hadidchi-Dabag in her letter:

- Emphasize how AI does indeed work on all countries - the new Annual Report has entries on over 125 countries all over the world. Enclose copies of two of AI's recent documents on Israel and Iraq, countries which Mrs Hadidchi-Dabag criticizes AI for being silent on.
- AI was extremely active on Iran under the Shah. It was particularly critical of torture, and took up the cases of a number of those who are in government today when they were imprisoned.
- Explain the limitations of AI's mandate with regard to war and to human rights violations by non-governmental entities. Explain how the mandate is decided through a democratic process in which all our membership is involved, and that we limit the kind of human rights violations we work on for practical reasons, so we can concentrate our resources and work more effectively. The fact that AI as an organization cannot comment on atrocities in the conduct of war does not mean that its members do not feel for the suffering of the victims of such acts.
- AI does not condone acts of violence, or contest the right of governments to punish those responsible for them, as long as the penalties imposed do not constitute cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment. It does not seek to protect those who are guilty of such acts, but campaigns for safeguards such as fair trials in political cases and an end to incommunicado detention to ensure that innocent people are not convicted of crimes they have not committed and torture does not occur.
- Mrs Hadidchi-Dabag refers to AI visiting prisons in Iran, which it has never done. Perhaps she is thinking of another human rights organization, such as the Red Cross. AI has been trying for several years to send a delegation to Iran, but to hold talks with the government, not to visit prisons.
- Mrs Hadidchi-Dabag says we should not publish material which is not based on proper research; AI is very careful about this. Its allegations regarding torture in Iran, for instance, are based on hundreds of interviews over a period of years with people who have suffered or witnessed torture, and in many cases there has been medical evidence which has supported their stories. Such a large quantity of detailed, first-hand evidence cannot be dismissed simply because the government says torture does not occur. AI has frequently asked the Iranian Government for comments on its documents, and expressed its willingness to reflect them when those documents are published; it also continues to seek talks and regrets very much the government's lack of response to both these requests.





DANISH SECTION
GROUP 70

To the Honorable Member of the Islamic consultative Assembly
Mrs. Marzieh Tahereh Hadidchi - Dabag
Islamic consultative Assembly
Imam Khomeini Avenue
Tehran - Iran

Dear Mrs. Marzieh Tahereh Hadidchi-Dabag,

Thank you very much for taking the trouble to write such a long letter to Mrs. Ulla Nielsen. Unfortunately Ulla Nielsen is not able to write to you as she has gone to Greenland and so cannot participate in our Amnesty group any longer.

On behalf of the same group I will try to answer your letter. First of all I wish to give you all my sympathy because of the hard times you and your family have gone through during the Shah's regime. I am happy to be able to assure you that lots of protests about torture and inhuman treatments of prisoners were sent by Amnesty International to members of the Shah's regime at that time.

You write in your letter about the changing of the meaning of words. In my opinion the word "human rights" simply means that you must treat all human beings as you yourself would like to be treated by them, and I cannot possibly see that it can have any other meaning. We don't like other people to kill us, and this is the way Amnesty International looks upon the death penalty - it is an inhuman, degrading and humiliating way of treating other people. So no matter how ~~how~~ cruel crimes a person has committed, Amnesty International strongly advocates a more humane kind of punishment. We think that all governments of the whole world should set their people an example by not using violence in their way of punishing criminals and that all sorts of punishment that go against the right to life such as it is stated in Article 3 in the Universal Declaration



amnesty international

DANISH SECTION
GROUP 70

of Human Rights should be avoided by all governments. You yourself know from your own experiences from prisons both in Iran and England how terrible it is for a person to be tortured and humiliated. So, please, go on doing your very best to see that this does not happen in the prisons of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

You ask us to see that our Danish prisoners are treated in a humane way, but according to Amnesty International's rules we are not allowed to mingle in matters of human rights in our own country on behalf of the organization. This rule is given in order to safeguard absolute impartiality of the organization's work and to protect members from being persecuted in their own countries, which may happen in some countries. Amnesty International has no wish to inspect your prisons, but would very much like to be given access to your country to discuss matters of human rights abuses in Iran with responsible officials. So if you can do something to help establishing such a meeting I would be very thankful.

It seems to me that you have misunderstood what is Amnesty International's mandate. We are not a peace movement so that we ought to intervene in the war atrocities that have happened or happen in all wars. Our mandate is to work for an end to torture and the death penalty, a fair trial for all political prisoners and the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience, that is people imprisoned for their beliefs, ethnic origin or religion provided that they have not used or advocated violence.

We work for this all over the world and are not influenced by any superpower as you seem to think. To exemplify this I can tell you that in 1987 I wrote many letters to the USA, advocating the abolition of the death penalty, and also letters to the USSR about the release of prisoners of conscience.



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DANISH SECTION
GROUP 70

I was very moved by your letter and feel deeply with your people as with all people that have to go through the horrors and tribulations of war.

If there is anything about our work in Amnesty International you would like to know more about, I would be very pleased to answer any question you would like to ask.

I send you my best wishes for a happy future!

Sincerely Yours,

Birthe M. Holst.

Birthe M. Holst (Mrs.)

8A Nørregade,

4930 Maribo

Denmark, Europe.





MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
OF THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

In the Name of Allah, the Almighty

Mrs Anne Blystad, Slette bakksun 84

N-5030 LANDAS - NORWAY

Dear Madam,

I acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated Dec 21st, 1987 which was read carefully and with interest. The trite ideas raised in your letter, that are repeated in many other similar letters, clearly testify to the fact that you had been influenced by malicious propaganda and misinformed about the Islamic Republic of Iran and its legal and political systems. It is also possible that you have only signed a letter dictated to you, without verifying its contents.

Unfortunately, it seems as if you and the other people who send such letters, have tried to assess and criticize a system, based on lofty Islamic teachings and values, without a genuine knowledge about the legal and political systems of the Islamic Republic of Iran. I think the following clarifications about the human rights and basic liberties ensured in the Islamic Republic of Iran will throw some light on this subject.

In accordance with the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Iran, all people of Iran, men and women alike, are equally protected by law, and enjoy every human, political, economic, social, and cultural right, in conformity with the Islamic criteria (Principle 19);

The dignity, life, property, rights, residence and occupation of all individuals are inviolable, except in cases sanctioned by law, (Principle 22);

1708

TO _____

COPIES _____

Date: Feb 15, 1988

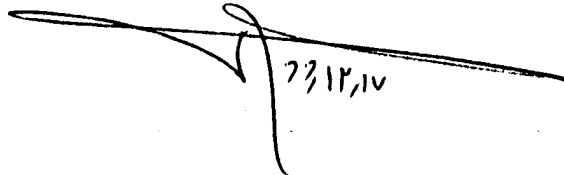
No one may be prosecuted, arrested or punished, except in accordance with the procedure laid down by the law (Principle 32).

We are, however, confident that you have signed the letter without any ill-intentions, and only because you have been inadequately informed about the legal and political system of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and kept uninformed about the divine precepts and the judicial system based on them.

The above facts mentioned, we wish to inform you that we are ready to provide you with correct information about the realities of our system, and answer any questions that may occur to you./Z

Sincerely Yours,

Seyyed Kazem Akrami
Minister of Education



۷۳/۱۲/۱۷

APPENDIX 4Guidelines for reply to letter from His Excellency Seyyed Kazem Akrami, Minister of Education

A member of the Norwegian section has received a copy of the letter from the Minister of Education reproduced as Appendix 3. This is the first time an Iranian official of ministerial rank has replied to AI. If you or any member of your group receives a similar letter, please let the IS know and please reply using the guidelines below.

1. Mention that AI submitted the two memoranda which formed the basis for the publication and letter writing campaign to the Iranian Government in 1986 months before the publication date. AI asked at that time for clarification of any errors of fact contained in the memoranda, and for any other comments the Iranian Government wished to make. No reply was received from any Iranian authority despite the fact that the memoranda were translated into Farsi and submitted to numerous authorities. Respectfully point out that the Iranian Government was given ample opportunity to correct any misinformation contained in the report, but chose not to do so.
2. State that AI welcomed the existence of various constitutional safeguards of human rights in its memoranda. However, the extent and consistency of evidence collected by AI, presented in its report, and elsewhere in AI documents, suggests that constitutional safeguards alone are not enough to prevent human rights abuses.
3. Suggest that if the Iranian Government wishes to provide AI with information about their system for safeguarding human rights, as the minister states in the last paragraph of his letter, then AI would welcome a substantive response to the issues raised in its memoranda.
4. AI representatives are prepared to meet Iranian Government representatives to discuss the organization's concerns in Iran. It has in fact requested such a meeting on numerous occasions but never met with a favourable response from the Iranian Government. Such talks would in AI's view be an important step to improve mutual understanding in the shared interest of promoting the observance of human rights in Iran.
5. Copies of AI's report have been sent to ministers and members of parliament in Iran. If the minister has not seen a copy, or if he has any other questions about the work of AI, ask him to contact the International Secretariat.
6. Inform the minister that AI has prepared another document on Iran which will be sent to him. Mention that the IS would welcome his comments on this new document.
7. Thank him for replying to your letter.

