

THE OBSERVATORY

for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

L'OBSERVATOIRE
pour la Protection
des Défenseurs des Droits de l'Homme

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para la Protección de los
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**BRAZIL - Search / Harassment
24 March 2006 - BRA 001 / 0306 / OBS 033**

On 22 March 2006, seven armed policemen, including the Chief of Police of the town of Camaquã, conducted a search into the headquarters of the **Association of rural woman workers** (*Associação de Mulheres Trabalhadoras Rurais*) in the town of Paso Fundo, State of Rio Grande do Sul. The officers confiscated computer hard disks, CDs and floppy disks containing important information on the organisation's projects, members and accounts, as well as distinctive symbols and materials belonging to the association.

The police also verbally abused seven women belonging to the association and one child, before detaining them while they carried out the search.

On 8 March 2006, which is International Women's Day, the organisation had taken part in a land occupation at Aracruz, organised by *Via Campesina*, an association that coordinates small and medium-sized organisations of smallholders, rural workers and indigenous communities.

CAMBODIA – Arbitrary detention / Judicial proceedings / Release on bail

4 January 2006 - KHM 001 / 0106 / OBS 001

10 January 2006 - KHM 001 / 0106 / OBS 001.1

13 January 2006 - KHM 001 / 0106 / OBS 001.2

18 January 2006 - KHM 001 / 0106 / OBS 001.3

15 February 2006 - KHM 001 / 0106 / OBS 001.4

On 31 December 2005, Mr. **Kem Sokha**, president of the Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR), was arrested and taken to the municipal court of Phnom Penh by Daun Penh district police officers and Interior Ministry agents bearing a search warrant and a summons. After a long interrogation, Mr. Sokha was charged with "defamation" by the Prime Minister, Mr. Hun Sen, for having displayed banners criticising his government's policies on the CCHR stand on 10 December 2005, the International Human Rights Day. Mr. Sokha was then taken to the Prey Sor prison, close to Phnom Penh, where neither his family nor his lawyers were permitted to see him.

On the same day, Mr. **Yeng Virak**, director of the Community Legal Education Centre (CLEC) and a member of the organising committee for celebrations of the International Human Rights Day, was also brought before the court, interrogated and charged with defamation on the same grounds. After several weeks of detention in Prey Sor prison, he was released on bail on 11 January 2006.

On 4 January 2006, Mr. **Pa Nguon Teang**, CCHR deputy director and producer of its *Voice of Democracy* radio programme, Mr. **Ou Virak**, head of public relations, and one of their friends were arrested by the police. Mr. Pa Nguon Teang was then taken to the Interior Ministry in Phnom Penh, where he was held overnight before being interrogated on his role in organising the 10 December celebrations.

On 17 January 2006, following a conversation with a US government representative, Mr. Kem Sokha and Mr. Pa Nguon Teang were released on bail on the order of the Prime Minister.

On 3 February 2006, criminal complaints for defamation against Messrs. Kem Sokha, Pa Nguon Teang and Yeng Virak, were officially withdrawn.

However, defamation charges against Messrs. Pa Nguon Teang, Kem Sokha and Yeng Virak are still pending before criminal courts. Indeed, under the UNTAC Law, the withdrawal of a criminal defamation complaint does not mean that the charges are dropped. Therefore, the prosecutor can pursue charges against the three men until 1 July 2006 for this crime, which is punishable by eight days up to one year of imprisonment and/or a fine of between one million (around 210 euros) and ten million riels.

CAMEROON – Harassment
3 March 2006 - CMR 001 / 0306 / OBS 022

On 10 February 2006, Mr. **Ahmadou Rhékang**, a member of the Movement for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (*Mouvement pour la défense des droits de l'Homme et des libertés* - MDDHL), was detained for more than two hours in the offices of the provincial division of the police criminal investigation department of the Far North, in Maroua, where policemen humiliated him and threatened him with imprisonment if he did not resign from MDDHL. The arrest took place when Mr. Rhékang came to lodge a complaint on behalf of Mr. Collins Okoro, a Nigerian citizen, who had asked MDDHL for help after being summoned by the criminal investigation department in a case relating to his professional activities. The policemen in charge of the inquiry had then confiscated his residence permit. Following the arrest of Mr. Rhékang, Mr. **Blaise Yacoubou**, head of protection at the MDDHL office, and author of the complaint, was summoned by the Divisional Chief and insulted by the policemen who brought him the summons. On 1 March 2006, Mr. Yacoubou was again summoned by the criminal investigation department, three days after he had coordinated a training seminar for MDDHL members in Maroua.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC – Serious threats
20 January 2006 – CAF 001 / 0106 / OBS 008

Several human rights defenders received threats in the aftermath of unrest that took place at the beginning of January 2006, following the killing of sub-lieutenant Wilfrid Yango Kapita, who was shot by sergeant major Jean-Claude Sanzé during the night of 2 to 3 January 2006. On 3 January 2006, Mr. Sanzé was forcibly removed from the prison where he was held in police custody, tortured, and then shot by comrades of Mr. Yango Kapita, in the premises of the Intelligence and Investigation Service (*Service de renseignement et d'investigation* - SRI).

On the same day, the domicile of Mr. **Nicolas Tiangaye**, a lawyer, former president of the Central African League for Human Rights (*Ligue Centrafricaine des droits de l'Homme* - LCDH), former president of the Central African Bar Association, and former president of the National Transition Council (*Conseil national de transition*), of whom Mr. Sanzé had been military assistant, was ransacked and looted.

Furthermore, during a meeting at the headquarters of *Kwa Na Kwa* (“Work, nothing but Work” - KNK), an association of followers of the President of the Republic, Mr. Celestin Dogo, a soldier known to have committed assassinations and other human rights violations, declared his intention of “giving his due” to Mr. **Nganatouwa Goungaye Wanfiyo**, a lawyer and LCDH president.

On 4 January 2006, Mr. **Adolphe Ngouyombo**, president of the Movement for Human Rights and Humanitarian Action (*Mouvement pour les droits de l'Homme et d'action humanitaire* - MDDH), and Mr. **Maka Gbossoketto**, a journalist, president of the Union of Central African Journalists (*Union des journalistes centrafricains* - UJCA) and editor of the daily newspaper *Le Citoyen*, which had in particular published an article denouncing violations committed by the military, received threats by telephone.

Lastly, on 10 January 2006, Mr. **Emile Ndjapou**, a magistrate and president of the Litigation Department of the State Council, received threats after having spoken about the human rights situation and the peace process in the Central African Republic during a meeting organised by ECOSEFAD, an NGO involved notably in the promotion of fundamental freedoms. He had on that occasion criticised the attitude of the army. That very evening, a military vehicle burst into his domicile, threatening to ram the gates. Mr. Ndjapou's son managed to get rid of the aggressors by turning off the lights and releasing the watchdogs.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO – Serious threats / Harassment
14 February 2006 – RDC 008 / 1205 / OBS 128.1

In February 2006, Mr. **Donat Mbaya Tshimanga** and Mr. **Tshivis Tshivuadi**, respectively president and secretary general of the NGO Journalists in Danger (*Journalistes en Danger* - JED), received several anonymous phone calls from persons threatening them and accusing them of “working for the opposition”, “playing with people's honour” and “making accusations without proof”.

These threats were subsequent to the publication on 7 February 2006 in the newspaper *Le Soft* of an article on the enquiries carried out by JED on the assassination of Mr. Franck Ngyke Kangundu, a journalist, and his wife, Ms. Hélène Mpaka, during the night of 2 to 3 November 2005. The results of the enquiry would refer to the possible responsibility of several persons close to the government or of senior civil servants.

Furthermore, on 10 February 2006, witnesses went to JED headquarters to warn the members of the organisation that the offices were regularly watched by a group of police officers for several hours running.

Owing to such accusations and threats, Mr. Mbaya Tshimanga and Mr. Tshivuadi were forced to hide themselves for ten days for safety reasons.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO – Threats / Harassment
6 March 2006 – COD 001 / O306 / OBS 024

On 3 March 2006, the office of the **Committee of Human Rights Observers** (*Comité des observateurs des droits de l'Homme* - CODHO) received a phone call from a person claiming to be a member of the security services of the President of the Republic, who uttered threats against the organisation if it did not stop its activities. He explicitly referred to several court cases on which CODHO was working, in particular one involving a former lady assistant to President Laurent Désiré Kabila. The man added that in the event of a refusal, the security services would close down CODHO offices and its members would be arrested.

CHILE – Arbitrary detention / Harassment / Judicial proceedings
9 January 2006 - CHL 001 / 0705 / OBS 056.2
13 January 2006 - CHL 001 / 0705 / OBS 056.3
10 February 2006 – Press release
1 March 2006 - CHL 001 / 0705 / OBS 056.4

On 4 January 2006, Mrs. **Juana Calfunao Paillalef**, *lonko* (traditional chief) of the “Juan Paillalef” Mapuche community in the commune of Cunco (Temuco), was arrested at home by special forces police on the orders of the Temuco Court of Guarantees. Mrs. Mercedes Paillalef Moraga, Arleni Calfunao Sandoval, Carolina Landero Calfunao, Rosnelia Neculman Calfunao, Relmutray Cadin Calfunao and Catalina Ramírez Calfunao, members of her family who were also present, were released after an identity check.

On 5 January 2006, Mrs. Calfunao Paillalef was charged with “public disorder” and “threats against security forces” by the Temuco Court of Guarantees, and remanded in custody at the Temuco Women’s Prison, to await the trial facing both her and her sister, Mrs. **Luisa Ana Calfunao Paillalef**, who was charged with the same offences.

Mrs. Juana Calfunao Paillalef went on hunger strike between 10 and 22 January 2006 to denounce the violations suffered by her community members.

On 22 February 2006, the Court of Temuco gave Mrs. Juana Calfunao Paillalef and her sister a 61-day suspended sentence (*presidio menor en su grado mínimo*) for “public disorder”, with the requirement to report to the Temuco Commissariat every fortnight during one year, and banned them from public office during the same period. Mrs. Juana Calfunao Paillalef was given another 61-day suspended sentence for “threats against security forces”. Mrs. Calfunao’s lawyer appealed to the Temuco Court of Appeal.

CHINA – Arbitrary detention / Ill-treatments
13 February 2006 - CHN 001 / 0206 / OBS 014

Mr. **Zhao Changqing**, who has been held at the Weinan prison in the province of Shaanxi since 2002, has been repeatedly subjected to ill-treatments while in detention.

Thus, in December 2005 and early 2006, Mr. Zhao, who suffers from tuberculosis, spent 40 days in solitary confinement following his refusal to sing “Socialism is Good”, a song praising the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system.

Mr. Zhao was also beaten by fellow prisoners and placed in solitary confinement despite his wounds, for having been in contact with another prisoner, a Falun Gong practitioner. On 18 February 2006, Mr. Zhao was again placed in solitary confinement for three months because of his “incorrect attitude” towards a prison officer.

Mr. Zhao was sentenced in August 2003 to five years prison for “incitement to subvert State power” after he co-signed in November 2002 an “Open Letter to the 16th Party Congress”, calling, in particular, for progress with regards to democratisation and human rights protection in China and the release of prisoners of conscience.

CHINA – Harassment / Arbitrary detention / Release
24 February 2006 - CHN 001 / 0206 / OBS 018

On 9 February 2006, Mr. **Yang Maodong**, *alias* Guo Feixiong, a lawyer assisting the villagers of Taishi who were trying to obtain the dismissal of the chief of the village committee, who is suspected of corruption, was detained at the Fuyou police station in Beijing. He was released the next day and escorted back home by three policemen. His house has since been under police surveillance and all his movements are being monitored.

Mr. Yang had previously been detained on 3 February 2006 and held for several hours at the Linhe police station in Guangzhou. When released, he was beaten and photographed by a group of unknown persons, while police officers stood by.

Furthermore, Mr. **Tang Jingling**, another lawyer assisting the villagers of Taishi, was followed and beaten by five unknown persons on 2 February 2006 when returning from a visit to Mr. Yang. After having reported the incident to

the police, he was followed all his way home by two taxis.

CHINA – Release / Harassment / Arbitrary detention
2 March 2006 - CHN 002 / 1103 / OBS 060.2

On 23 February 2006, Mr. **Xiao Yunliang**, a labour activist from the province of Liaoning, who was imprisoned since March 2002 for “attack on national security”, was released three weeks before completing his four-year prison sentence. Since his release, however, Mr. Xiao has remained under house arrest, and friends or relatives attempting to visit him have been harassed and intimidated by the police.

Mr. Xiao Yunliang had been sentenced in May 2003 to four years in prison and three years of deprivation of his civic and political rights, having led, together with Mr. **Yao Fuxin**, a workers’ demonstration against corruption and the non-payment of overdue salary in northeast China in March 2002.

Mr. Yao Fuxin, who was sentenced in May 2003 to seven years in prison and three years of deprivation of his civic and political rights, is currently held at Lingyuan prison and is due to be released in March 2009.

CHINA – Arbitrary detention
31 March 2006 - CHN 003 / 0306 / OBS 039

On 20 February 2006, Mrs. **Liu Hua** and her husband Mr. **Yue Yongjin**, two rural land rights activists from the district of Shenyang, in the province of Liaoning, were arrested by members of the Public Security Bureau (PSB) You’anmen dispatch station, after filing petitions in Beijing against corruption and illegal land seizures in their village, just before the annual session of the National People’s Congress.

On 21 February 2006, Mrs. Liu and Mr. Yue were forcibly returned to Shenyang, where they remained detained at the Shenyang’s Masanjia Re-education Centre and the Sujiatun District Detention Centre respectively, even though no arrest warrants were issued against them.

A PSB officer said that Mrs. Liu was being held because she had caused trouble in Beijing, and that her crimes were “serious”.

COLOMBIA – Arbitrary detention
13 January 2006 - COL 001 / 0106 / OBS 004

On 4 January 2006, Mr. **Príncipe Gabriel González Arango**, coordinator of the Santander Section of the Foundation Committee for Solidarity with Political Prisoners (*Fundación Comité de Solidaridad con los Presos Políticos - FCSPP*), was arrested on the orders of the office of the public prosecutor of Pamplona (Santander department). Mr. González Arango was later transferred to Bucaramanga, to the premises of the Unified Action Group for Freedom of Colombia (*Grupo de Acción Unificado para la Libertad de Colombia - GAULA*). On 5 January 2006, Mr. González Arango was questioned by the Rapid Response Unit (*Unidad de Reacción Inmediata*) of the office of the public prosecutor and charged with “rebellion”. Mr. González Arango was detained in the “model prison” of Bucaramanga, pending his trial, after having being detained for a few day at the Prison of Palo Gordo, in solitary confinement.

COLOMBIA – Murder
19 January 2006 - COL 002 / 0106 / OBS 006

On 12 January 2006, Mr. **Edilberto Vázquez Cardona**, head of the Arenas Altas humanitarian zone, was shot at point-blank range after being dragged violently from his home by soldiers of the regular army. The soldiers also fired at another house where two people from the community had managed to flee.

Mr. Vázquez Cardona’s son informed of these facts the Office of People’s Defence Counsel (*Defensoría*), whose representatives went to meet the army soldiers in San Josesito. The latter acknowledged they had killed Mr. Vázquez Cardona, who was, according to them, a “member of the guerrillas who had a radio, a handgun and grenades”.

On the same day, the army returned Mr. Vázquez Cardona’s body to the Arenas Altas zone in San José, without authorising his family to identify it. Later, a commission, composed of the *Defensoría* and relatives of Mr. Vázquez Cardona, found his body in the neighbourhood of his home, where several threat messages had been left.

COLOMBIA – Death threats / Harassment / Assassinations
24 February 2006 - COL 003 / 0206 / OBS 019

On 27 December 2005 and 9 January 2006, Mr. **Gilberto Cadena Bohórquez**, a member of the National Association of Displaced Persons of Colombia (*Asociación Nacional de Desplazados de Colombia - ANDESCOL*), was approached by Mr. Arnoldo Echeverría, a member of the 2nd Brigade of the army and an informant for their

rehabilitation programme. The latter offered to enrol him on this programme in exchange of the sum of 2,00,000 Colombian pesos (U.S \$1,000), and to work under the orders of the GAULA in Barranquilla.

This offer aimed at getting Mr. Cadena to collaborate in the intimidation, attack or elimination of the human rights defenders he knew, including Mr. **Mauricio Avilez**, a member of the Inter-Ecclesiastical Commission for Justice and Peace (*Comisión Intereclesial Justicia y Paz - CIJP*) and representative of the Operational Committee for Human Rights Colombia - Europe - United States (CCEEU), and Mr. **Milton Mejía**, a member of the Executive Committee of the Ecumenical Network of Colombia.

On 12 January 2006, after having indicated that he would not collaborate, Mr. Cadena found the door of his house forced open along with a message threatening him with death. A few minutes later, when Mr. Cadena Bohórquez was chatting in the street with two friends, Messrs. **Luis Aurelio Rudas Revollo** and **Anarael Alfonso Daigo Montes**, two motorcyclists drove around them before shooting at them, killing Mr. Rudas outright. Mr. Daigo Montes died shortly afterward from his injuries. Mr. Gilberto Cadena was able to escape and since then has left the region.

On 15 January 2006, Mr. Echeverria visited the home of Mr. Cadena's wife, Mrs. **Gladys Londoño**, and threatened her, asking where her husband was. After these events, Mrs. Londoño and her four children had to find refuge elsewhere. On 26 January 2006, Mr. Echeverria found Mrs. Londoño, threatened her again and warned her that Mr. Gilberto had until the following day to reappear.

COLOMBIA – Judicial harassment
1 March 2006 - COL 004 / 0306 / OBS 021

On 14 December 2005, the 42nd section Public Prosecutor of Buenaventura (Valle department) ordered the detention of 14 persons, including Mr. **Diego Camilo Figueroa Rincón**, defender of economic, social, cultural and environmental rights and active CIJP member. On 16 December 2005, the Public Prosecutor ordered the Administrative Department for Security (*Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad - DAS*) to arrest Mr. Figueroa Rincón.

On 17 February 2006, CIJP learned that Mr. Diego Camilo Figueroa, according to a DAS report, would be facing a lawsuit on charges of being an “ideologist of the Manuel Cepeda Vargas Front” of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Columbia (*Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia - FARC*).

COLOMBIA – Serious threats / Harassment
3 March 2006 - COL 009 / 0504 / OBS 040.1

In February 2006, inhabitants of the town of Buga, in the department of Valle del Cauca, received a message from an unidentified paramilitary group, threatening, amongst others, Mr. **Guillermo Castaño Arcila**, president of the Permanent Committee for the Defence of Human Rights (*Comité Permanente para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos - CPDH*), in the department of Risaralda, the Governor of Valle del Cauca, Mr. Angelino Garzón, as well as several institutions and organisations, including the Great Peasant Institute (*Instituto Mayor Campesino - IMCA*).

In 2004 and 2005, Mr. Guillermo Castaño Arcila, who, since three years, has been conducting an ecological agricultural project with peasants of Valle del Cauca in the commune of Tulúa, had already been subjected to threats and intimidation.

COLOMBIA - Assassination
6 March 2006 - COL 005 / 0306 / OBS 025

On 2 March 2006, Mr. **Héctor Díaz Serrano**, a member of the Trade Union for Workers in the Oil Industry (*Unión Sindical Obrera - USO*) and employee of the Colombian Oil Company (*Empresa Colombiana de Petróleos - ECOPELROL*) in Campo Casabe, was murdered, in the El Cincuentenario quarter, in Barrancabermeja, department of Santander, on his way to work.

On the same day, death threats had been published in the newspaper *Vanguardia Liberal* against trade union members of the United Confederation of Workers (*Central Unitaria de Trabajadores - CUT*), the Association of Departmental Workers (*Asociación de Trabajadores Departamentales - ASTDEMP*), the Workers' Union of Santander (*Unión Sindical de Trabajadores de Santander - USITRAS*), the Metropolitan Coordination for Displaced Persons (*Coordinación Metropolitana de Desplazados*) and USO. These trade unionists had stand as candidates for the House of Representatives and for the Senate of the Republic. This message was signed by Captain Taraza, of the “Regional Commando of Magdalena Medio”.

COLOMBIA – Judicial proceedings / Harassment
17 March 2006 - COL 006 / 0306 / OBS 031

On 12 October 2005, the Prosecutor Héctor Cruz opened a criminal investigation for “aggravated homicide”, “forced displacement” and “rebellion” against several CIJP members and the leaders of the Communities of Jiguamiandó and Curvaradó, in the department of Chocó, including: Messrs. **Ligia María Chaverra Minerai**, **Manuel Denis Blandón**, **Willington Cuesta**, **Fany Osten**, **Luis Ferias**, **Erasmo Cuadrado** and **Benjamin Sierra**, and several members of CIJP, Mr. **Wilson Gómez**, Mr. **Leonardo Jaimes**, Mrs. **Johana López** and Mrs. **Ana María Lozano**, Mr. **Danilo Rueda** and the theologian, **Abilio Peña**.

On 8 March 2006, policemen visited the estate of Mr. **Enrique Petro**, leader of the community of Curvaradó who benefits from precautionary protection measures of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights (CoIDH). He was questioned about several meetings that had been held at his home concerning the construction, in the weeks to come, of a “humanitarian zone” to allow the return of half-breed and Afro-Columbian families facing the risk of famine.

On 9 and 10 March 2006, several military units of the 17th Brigade visited in turn Mr. Petro’s home for the same reason, saying that “the guerrilla [was] on this property”, referring to the displaced families.

COLOMBIA – Death threats / Harassment
24 March 2006 - COL 007 / 0306 / OBS 035

On 7 March 2006, an unknown person delivered to the office of the Legal Corporation “Yira Castro” in Bogotá, department of Cundinamarca, a letter addressed to Mr. **Carlos Gualteros**, head of the United Peasants’ Association of Colombia (*Asociación Campesina Unidos por Colombia - ACUDECOL*) and member of the board of the Corporation of Displaced People of Colombia (*Corporación de Desplazados de Colombia - CORPADECOL*). On 10 March 2006, Mr. Carlos Gualteros learned about this letter, signed by Mr. Carlos Mario Bertys, alias “La Cuchilla”, commander of the Northern Bloc of the United Self-Defence of Colombia (*Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia - AUC*), and which contained threats against members of the board and CORPADECOL replacements, including himself.

COLOMBIA – Assassinations
31 March 2006 - COL 008 / 0306 / OBS 038

On 5 and 6 March 2006, Mr. **Juan Rodríguez Villamizar**, indigenous leader, and his wife, Mrs. **Luz Miriam Farías Rodríguez**, ethnic teacher of the Caño Claro community, were murdered by FARC members.

Furthermore, on 22 March 2006, Mr. **Wilson García Reatiga**, chairman of the communal assembly and former member of the Committee of the Association of Rural Inhabitants and Workers in Arauca (*Asociación de Usuarios del Campo - ANUC-UR*), in the village of Santo Domingo (municipality of Tame, Arauca), was murdered in La Siberia (Tame), by members of one of the armed opposition groups operating in the region. He had previously received threats from the FARC.

CUBA - Harassment
19 January 2006 – Open letter to the authorities

Since 12 January 2006, acts of harassment against Mr. **Juan Carlos González Leiva**, chairman of the Cuban Human Rights Foundation (*Fundación Cubana de los Derechos Humanos*), sentenced in 2004 to a house arrest order in the province of Ciego de Ávila, have increased. Thus, loud speakers placed around the doors and windows of his house broadcast music day and night, preventing him from sleeping. Mrs. **Tania Maseda Guerra**, a member of the Foundation, and Mr. **Luis Esteban Espinosa**, an independent journalist, joined him as a token of their support and also endured this nuisance.

In addition, about a hundred people permanently were wandering around his house committing acts of vandalism or threatening to enter the house and setting fire to those inside.

Besides, many activists and relatives of Mr. González Leiva, who regularly attempted to help him, including Mrs. **Yodalis Calderín Nuñez**, his niece, Mr. Luis Esteban Espinosa and the psychologist **Antonio Legón Mendoza**, were manhandled or beaten by these people.

Besides, the Cuban government has prevented Mr. **Agustín González**, Mr. González Leiva’s father, from leaving Cuba, although he had obtained a visa to go to the United States.

Lastly, on 14 January 2006, a neighbour, who was obviously in a drunken state, made defamatory remarks to Mrs. **Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello**, president of the Assembly for the Promotion of Civil Society (*Asamblea para la Promoción de la Sociedad Civil - APSC*) and a member of the Institute of Independent Economists, while banging on her window several times.

CUBA – Arbitrary detention / Search / Attacks
15 March 2006 - CUB 001 / 0306 / OBS 029

On 28 February 2006, in Havana, four agents from the State Security Department (*Departamento de Seguridad del Estado* - DSE) searched the home of Mr. **Roberto de Miranda Hernández**, head of the College of Independent Teachers of Cuba (*Colegio de Pedagogos Independientes de Cuba* - CPIC), who is on parole (*licencia extrapenal*), and of his wife, Mrs. **Soledad Rivas Verdecia**, member of the organisation “Ladies in White” (*Damas de Blanco*). The agents seized toys and sports equipment.

On the same day, members of the DSE, the National Revolutionary Police (*Policía Nacional Revolucionaria* - PNR) and the political police, with a search warrant for “opposition propaganda”, searched the home of Mr. **David Díaz Oliver**, president of the Martiana Youth Coalition (*Coalición Juvenil Martiana* - CJM), in the town of Santo Domingo, province of Villa Clara. The agents seized several items and documents, including leaflets containing photographs of two defenders.

Messrs. **Yunieski Rodríguez González** and **Yuniel Ima Rodríguez**, CJM members and present at the scene, along with Mr. Díaz Oliver, were arrested and held for several hours, before being released without charge.

After being taken to the police station in Santo Domingo, Mr. David Díaz Oliver was questioned for three hours about his possible participation in the Congress of Independent Libraries, organised by the Assembly for the Promotion of Civil Society and scheduled for 10 October 2006.

Furthermore, on 4 March 2006, the Rapid Response Brigade prevented four Europeans from visiting Mrs. Martha Beatriz Roque Cabello. When she left her house to speak with them, several people posted opposite her home insulted her and one of her neighbours attacked her.

In addition, since taking part in International Women’s Day on 8 March 2006, several members of the Latin American Federation of Rural Women (*Federación Latinoamericana de Mujeres Rurales* - FLAMUR), in the province of Pinar del Río, including Mrs. **Aurora Gonzáles Veliz**, received threats from political police members .

DJIBOUTI – Arbitrary detentions / Harassment / Judicial proceedings

20 February 2006 - DJI 001 / 0206 / OBS 016

23 February 2006 - DJI 001 / 0206 / OBS 016.1

6 March 2006 - DJI 001 / 0206 / OBS 016.2

9 March 2006 - DJI 001 / 0206 / OBS 016.3

14 March 2006 - Joint press release

1 April 2006 - Obstacles to an Observatory’s mission

On 22 January 2006, Mr. **Hassan Cher Hared**, secretary for international relations of the Djibouti Workers’ Union (*Union djiboutienne du Travail* - UDT), secretary general of the Postmen’s Workers’ Union and a postal worker himself, was arrested by two officers of the intelligence services, and questioned on the application files of several trade unionists for taking part in a training seminar in Israel. Mr. Cher Hared was released after this questioning.

On 20 February 2006, Mr. **Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed**, head of legal matters in the Port Workers’ Union (*Union des travailleurs du port* - UTP), and Mr. **Djibril Ismael Egueh**, secretary general of the Trade Union for Maritime Personnel and for the Transit Service (*Syndicat du personnel maritime et du service de transit* - SP-MTS), were arrested and taken to the offices of the Criminal Brigade of the intelligence services without a warrant or any official grounds. Messrs. Mohamed and Egueh were questioned about their trade union activities and about the training seminar in which they had just taken part in Israel.

They were released on 22 February 2006, without any charges. Nevertheless, their passports were confiscated by the police.

On 5 March 2006, Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed and Mr. Djibril Ismael Egueh were again arrested and held in solitary confinement, in the offices of the Criminal Brigade of the national police force. After hearing Messrs. Mohamed and Egueh, the police searched their homes, while they were still being held, and confiscated all the documents they found on the premises including those concerning the trade union activities of the two men. No warrant would have been produced at the time.

On 8 March 2006, Messrs. Mohamed and Egueh appeared before the examining magistrate, who charged them with “providing information to a foreign power”, and placed them in detention, in the Gabode prison in Djibouti.

In addition, on 11 March 2006, Mr. **Adan Mohamed**, UDT secretary general, and Mr. Hassan Cher Hared were arrested by the police and taken to the offices of the Criminal Brigade without being shown a warrant. Messrs. Mohamed and Cher Hared were brought before an examining judge for questioning, then charged with “providing information to a foreign power” (articles 137 to 139 of the Djibouti Penal Code), before being placed in detention in the Gabode civilian prison. They would have been denied access both to a lawyer and a doctor.

The four activists were released on bail on 6 April 2006.

On 1 April 2006, the members of a joint mission sent by the Observatory and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), in order to meet with trade union activists in Djibouti, were forbidden to enter the territory, in spite of a preliminary verbal agreement of the Minister of the Interior. Insulted and shoved, they were forced back into the plane.

ETHIOPIA – Arbitrary detentions
5 January 2006 – Open letter to the authorities

On 1 November 2005, Mr. **Mesfin Woldemariam**, former president of the Ethiopian Human Rights Council (EHRCO), was arrested at his home. On 7 November 2005, the Federal Court in Addis Ababa ordered an extension for 14 more days of his imprisonment, as well as that of seven other defenders in order to conduct an investigation. On 21 November and 1 December 2005, his requests for release on bail were rejected. Since the beginning of his imprisonment, Mr. Woldemariam has gone on two hunger strikes, and his health has sharply deteriorated.

On 21 December 2005, he was formally charged with several crimes, including “conspiracy”, “armed uprising”, “attempt to subvert the Constitution”, “high treason” and “genocide”, as were Mr. **Daniel Bekele**, Policy, Research and Advocacy Manager for Action Aid Ethiopia, who was arrested on 1 November 2005, and 127 other people, including two minors, which crimes are punishable by a sentence ranging from 25 years imprisonment to the death penalty.

Furthermore, since the second wave of repression carried out by the authorities in October and November 2005, no information was obtained on the situation of Mr. **Negist G/Hiwot**, former member of EHRCO executive committee; Mr. **Tesfaye Bekele**, chairman of the members committee of the Dessae section, who was arrested on 25 October 2005 and released on bail on 28 October 2005; Mr. **Seifu Degu**, chairman of the committee of the Dessae section; Messrs. **Bezu Mekonen** and **Chanie Reta**, EHRCO members who were arrested on 4 November 2005.

In addition, on 1 and 2 November 2005, the names of Messrs. **Yared Haile Mariam** and **Chernet Tadesse** appeared on a list of people accused of treason and wanted by the government, and the home of the parents of Mr. **Wondimagegne Gashu**, a EHRCO member, was placed under permanent surveillance by plainclothes security agents and his mother was questioned by the police.

Mrs. **Elfinesh Demissie**, teacher and member of EHRCO executive committee, had to pay fines deducted from her salary for not having taught during the week of protest, although the school was closed and the transport system was disrupted during this period. Furthermore, she received a written threat of a “final action” from the authorities, without any explanation of what this action was.

GEORGIA – Threats / Harassment
8 February 2006 - GEO 001 / 0206 / OBS 013

On 1 and 2 February 2006, representatives of the Ministry of the Interior visited the Human Rights Information and Documentation Centre (HRIDC), demanding to “know more about the activities of the organisation”.

On 7 February 2006, Major Tengiz Tkebuchava, an employee of the Counter Terrorism Department at the Ministry of the Interior, called Mr. **Ucha Nanuashvili**, HRIDC executive director, to inform him that Mr. Gia Gabunia, head of this department, wanted to talk to him in order to “get to know” about HRIDC activities.

After Mr. Nanuashvili asked to be given an official and justified summons, Mr. Tkebuchava demanded he come immediately, threatening to bring him there by force. Nevertheless, Mr. Ucha Nanuashvili refused to go to the Ministry.

GREECE - Harassment
2 March 2006 – Open letter to the authorities

On 20 January 2006, during an interview to *Radio Omega*, Mr. Anastassios Kanellopoulos, Head of the Appeals Prosecutor’s Office, announced the opening of a preliminary inquiry based on protests by residents that six Roma families from Makrigianni, in the town of Patras, were throwing litter into the river. These Greek Roma families were threatened with expulsion despite a decision by the Magistrates’ Court of Patras dated 25 October 2005. During this announcement, Mr. Kanellopoulos underlined that his aim was to identify the authors and instigators of these acts, as well as their accomplices, referring explicitly to the **Greek Helsinki Monitor (GHM)**, an organisation known for fighting in favour of the rights of the Roma.

Several weeks before, the GHM had asked the First Instance Prosecutor to launch a criminal investigation into a series of illegal evictions, attacks and discriminatory acts against Roma people.

GUATEMALA – Killing / Attempted murder / Death threats
27 February 2006 - GTM 001 / 0206 / OBS 020

On 31 January 2006, Mr. **Mario Corado Solórzano Puac**, founder and president of the Richard Solórzano Foundation, was standing outside his house with his two children, including his son **Abner Alexander Solórzano Contreras**, member of the organisation, and a friend of the latter, **Jonathan Valente Barrios Mérida**, when a car stopped in front of them.

The occupants of the car, heavily armed and belonging, by all appearances, to the Reserve Forces and the Special Forces of the National Civil Police (PNC), opened fire on the group, wounding Jonathan, who died a few minutes later from his wounds.

On 1 February 2006, the Public Prosecutor's Office (*Procuraduría*) for human rights of Coatepeque asked for an inquiry to be opened and sent Mr. Solórzano's request to the Judge of the Peace of Coatepeque to grant, as a matter of urgency, security measures in favour of the Solórzano Contreras family. On 9 February 2006, these security measures were granted for an indefinite period.

IRAK – Assassination
27 January 2006 - IRQ 001 / 0106 / OBS 010

On 25 January 2006, Mr. **Alaa Issa Khalaf**, member of the Executive Board of the Baghdad branch of the Mechanics Union, and a prominent member of the General Federation of Iraqi Workers (GFIW), was shot dead by unknown persons when he was returning from work.

IRAN – Arbitrary detention / Judicial proceedings / Release on bail
13 January 2006 - IRN 002 / 0705 / OBS 055.3
6 March 2006 - IRN 002 / 0705 / OBS 055.4
23 March 2006 – Press release

In early January 2006, Mr. **Abdolfattah Soltani**, a lawyer at the Tehran Bar and a founding member of the Defenders of Human Rights Centre (DRHC), who was detained up till then in solitary confinement in the Evin prison in Tehran, was allowed to meet his lawyer.

Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani was arrested on 30 July 2005 while taking part in a sit-in in the premises of the Tehran Bar, to protest against the arrest warrant delivered against him by Mr. Said Mortazavi, Tehran Prosecutor, on 27 July 2005, for "spying".

On 6 March 2006, Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani was released after his bail of 100,000 euros was paid thanks to a national and international solidarity movement.

Nevertheless, although he had still not been informed of the charges against him and his lawyers had still not had access to his file, Mr. Abdolfattah Soltani appeared before the Revolutionary Tribunal of Tehran on 5 April 2006. Moreover, Mr. Soltani was informed by the Ministry of Justice that his election as a board member of the Tehran Bar Association was not valid as he was in prison at the time of his election.

IRAN - Release / Arbitrary detentions / Harassment
20 March 2006 – Press release

On the occasion of the Persian new year, Mr. **Akbar Ganji**, a journalist at the daily newspaper *Sobh-e-Emrooz*, was granted an anticipated release on 18 March 2006, a few days before the end of his prison term, scheduled for 30 March 2006.

Mr. Akbar Ganji was detained since 22 April 2000 at the Evin prison in Tehran, for having written several articles denouncing the involvement of the Iranian regime in the assassination of political opponents and intellectual dissidents in 1998 and for having taken part in a conference on the Iranian elections in Berlin, in April 2000. Mr. Ganji had been hospitalised in the Milad hospital in Tehran on 17 July 2005 after more than two months of hunger strike, which he finally ended on the night of 20 to 21 August 2005. He was taken back to prison on 3 September 2005, and had since been put into solitary confinement in a special quarter of the Evin prison.

However, human rights defenders in Iran are still being subjected to ongoing harassment. For example, on the occasion of the International Women's Day, on 8 March 2006, the Iranian police, plainclothes militiamen and members of the special anti-riot forces of the Revolutionary Guards repressed a sit-in organised in Tehran by independent women's groups and activists who were demonstrating in favour of women's rights and peace.

In addition, since 15 February 2006, several trade union leaders were still being held as of the end of March 2006, including Mr. **Mansour Osanloo**, Chairperson of the Workers' Union at Sherkat e Vahed (Tehran Bus Company), and Messrs. **Mansour Hayat Ghaibi** and **Yusseff Moradi**, members of the Executive Committee of this trade union. On 10 April 2006, Mr. Mansour Haiat Gaibi was released.

ISRAEL – Arbitrary detention / Risk of torture
19 January 2006 - ISR 001 / 0106 / OBS 007

On 11 January 2006, Mr. **Hassan Mustafa Hassan Zaga**, a field researcher of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel (PCATI) and of the Palestinian organisation "Ansar Asajeen", which provides legal aid to Palestinian

prisoners, was arrested by the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) at a checkpoint between Nablus and Tul Karem in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, and taken to the Hawarah military detention centre near Nablus. During a meeting with his lawyer, Mr. Zaga stated that he had been beaten by IDF agents at the time of his arrest.

On 17 January 2006, a six-month detention order was issued against him by the IDF Regional Commander, for “endangering the security of the region”.

In a letter dated 23 January 2006, the IDF military prosecutor justified Mr. Zaga’s administrative detention because of “his membership in Hamas, his international activism and the funding of various Hamas activities in the city of Nablus and its surroundings”. The prosecutor stressed that he could not reveal the evidence supporting these charges.

On 2 February 2006, the Ofer Military Court confirmed Mr. Zaga’s administrative detention, but reduced it to four months’ detention, now due to end on 17 May 2006.

ISRAEL - Arbitrary detention 15 March 2006 - ISR 001 / 0605 / OBS 039.4

On 12 March 2006, the Israeli authorities extended the administrative detention order against Mr. **Ziyad Muhammad Shehadeh Hmeidan**, a fieldworker of the Palestinian human rights NGO Al-Haq, for a further four-month period, without any charge being brought against him or any evidence to justify his detention. Mr. Ziyad Muhammad Shehadeh Hmeidan should initially have been released on 21 March 2006. On 20 March 2006, the Military Tribunal of the Ansar III (Ketziot) prison confirmed this renewal. On May 10, 2006, the military judge decided to uphold the extension of Mr. Ziyad Hmeidan’s administrative detention. Accordingly, Mr. Ziyad Hmeidan’s current administrative detention order should expire on July 12, 2006. However, there is no guarantee that it will not again be extended (see urgent appeal dated 16 May 2006, ISR 001/0605/OBS 039.5).

Mr. Ziyad Muhammad Shehadeh Hmeidan was arrested on 23 May 2005, while he was trying to cross the Qalandiya checkpoint, between Ramallah and Jerusalem. He was transferred to the Moscobiyya detention centre, in Jerusalem, on 27 May 2005. It is the fourth time that his detention order has been extended without valid grounds.

MARTIN ENNALS AWARD – Announcement of the nominees 13 February 2006 – Press Release

On 13 February 2006, the Jury of the Martin Ennals Award for Human Rights Defenders (MEA) announced the names of the four nominees for the 2006 Award: Mr. **Akbar Ganji (Iran)**, journalist at the daily newspaper *Sobh-e-Emrooz*, who was detained in the Teheran prison from 2000 to 2006 for having “undermined national security and engaged in propaganda against institutions of the Islamic State”; Mr. **Golden Misabiko (Democratic Republic of Congo)**, Honorary President of the Katanga section of the African Association for the Defence of Human Rights (*Association africaine de défense des droits de l’Homme - ASADHO*); Mr. **Arnold Tsunga (Zimbabwe)**, President of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (Zimrights) and Executive Director of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR); and Ms. **Jennifer Williams (Zimbabwe)**, one of the leader of the NGO Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA).

The Jury will announce the final MEA laureate on 23 May 2006.

MEXICO – Arbitrary detention / Judicial proceedings / Harassment 6 January 2006 - MEX 001 / 0106 / OBS 002 24 February 2006 - MEX 001 / 0106 / OBS 002.1

On 29 December 2005, Mr. **Martín Amaru Barrios Hernández**, president of the Human Rights Commission of the Tehuacán Valley (*Comisión de Derechos Humanos del Valle de Tehuacán - CDHLVT*), was arrested by the Puebla State police on “suspicion of blackmail”. This charge was based on statements made by a businessman, Mr. Lucio Gil Zárate, to whom Mr. Barrios Hernández would have, accordingly, extorted 150 thousand Mexican pesos (76 euros) in exchange for ending the social movement undertaken by 163 *maquiladores* workers. The workers, who had been fired after accused Mr. Gil Zárate to the Local Conciliation and Arbitration Board, were demanding fair severance pay.

On 4 January 2006, the Third Criminal Court ordered the preventive detention of Mr. Barrios Hernández. His lawyers said they would launch judicial proceedings before the Federal Justice for the protection of their client’s individual rights, and to present a petition to the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, considering that there were numerous irregularities in the trial.

On 12 February 2006, Mr. Barrios Hernández and his sister, Mrs. **Inti Barrios**, were informed by a relative close to several *maquileros* businessmen in the Tehuacán region that a hired killer had been employed to kill Mr. Barrios Hernández and all CDHLVT members.

Thus, on several occasions since mid-February, Mr. **Rodrigo Santiago Hernández** and Mr. **Gastón de la Luz Albino**, CDHLVT members, have noticed a group of men who seemed to belong to security forces, who followed

them, watched them and photographed them.

MEXICO – Harassment
23 February 2006 - MEX 002 / 0206 / OBS 017

On 2 February 2006, in San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Mr. **Mario M. Ruiz**, member of the Support Commission to Community Reconciliation and Unity (*Comisión de Apoyo a la Unidad y Reconciliación Comunitaria* - CORECO), was followed by a van with no registration plates. The van blocked his path and its two occupants, who looked as soldiers, threatened to kill him.

During the night of 9 February 2006, Mrs. **Marina Pagès**, coordinator of the International Service for Peace (*Servicio Internacional para la Paz* - SIPAZ) in Chiapas, was woken up by the ringing of her doorbell. When she opened the door she found a van parked in front of the house, playing the Zapatista anthem very loud. The vehicle stayed there without moving for several minutes, then drove to the home of Mrs. **Hélène Cannie**, also a SIPAZ member, where the same scene took place.

On 21 January 2006, a man named Kevin Maldonado, who had the day before turned up as an ordinary customer at the laundry of Mrs. **Marisa Kramsky**, a well-known Chiapas social activist, came back along with two men and repeatedly threatened to kill Mrs. Kramsky and her son, Mr. **Yksmark Kramsky Espinosa**. He then ordered one of his companions to go and get his weapon from the car. When Mrs. Kramsky managed to get to her mobile phone, the attackers left, promising to come back and kill them.

MEXICO - Threats / Harassment
3 March 2006 - MEX 003 / 0306 / OBS 023

On 24 February 2006, Mr. **Dámaso Villanueva Ramírez**, a member of the Citizens' Committee for the People's Defence (*Comité Ciudadano para la Defensa Popular* - COCIDEP), was arrested and taken to the Centre for Social Rehabilitation N°5 in San Cristóbal de las Casas, for "damaging private property", in this case the Pegaso cellular phone company (an antenna belonging to this company had been destroyed in 2004). The order for his arrest had been issued on 19 October 2005 by the Second Judge of the Criminal Branch responsible for minor crimes, in San Cristóbal de las Casas. Mr. Dámaso Villanueva had been informed that he could be freed if he paid bail equal to the cost of the antenna.

The detention of Mr. Dámaso adds to the reactivation of the order for the arrest of Mr. **Mario Álvarez Rodríguez**, a trade unionist belonging to the Palenque Central Workers' Union (*Central Unitaria de Trabajadores en Palenque* - CUT-ONPP), by the Catazajá judge for "theft with violence". This accusation refers to an old charge of which Mr. Álvarez Rodríguez was cleared in 2004 for lack of evidence.

MEXICO - Harassment
24 March 2006 - MEX 004 / 0306 / OBS 034

On 14 March 2006, several unknown persons searched the house of Mr. **David Méndez**, a member of the "Fray Bartolomé de las Casas" Human Rights Centre, and Mrs. **Norma Medina**, director of the *Cáritas* organisation in San Cristóbal de las Casas, in the State of Chiapas, after breaking the locks and doors. Only a laptop was taken. A complaint was filed with the authorities and the Public Ministry.

Mr. David Méndez organised the first national meeting against the government programme Procede/Procecom to privatise indigenous peoples' lands, which took place from 10 to 12 March 2006 in Petalcingo, Tila. On 10 March 2006, the military blocked the entrance to Petalcingo, where soldiers photographed Mr. David Méndez and other participants. The electricity supply was also cut and members of the Mexican army infiltrated the participants.

MEXICO – Assassination / Torture
28 March 2006 - MEX 005 / 0306 / OBS 036

On 11 March 2006, the body of Mr. **Francisco Concepción Gabino Quiñones**, an indigenous leader, was found bearing traces of torture. Mr. Gabino Quiñones was opposed to the activities of a mining company belonging to the Italian multinational Ternium, part of the Techint Group, in Peña Colorada, State of Jalisco. M. Gabino Quiñones was from the Cuzalapa *náhua* community and headed the fight against the introduction of the government programme Procecom, opposing the "illegal parcelling" of more than 7,000 hectares of communal lands.

MOROCCO / WESTERN SAHARA - Arbitrary arrests / Ill-treatment / Harassment
29 March 2006 - MAR 001 / 0306 / OBS 037

On 19 March 2006, Mr. **Hammud Iguilid**, president of the Laayoun Branch of the Moroccan Human Rights Association (*Association marocaine des droits humains - AMDH*), was kidnapped by Moroccan forces in the centre of the Saharawi capital. One of the Urban Security Groups (*Groupe urbain de sécurité - GUS*) entered his home at around 4 am which Mr. Iguilid was going to publish, was confiscated. Mr. Iguilid was subjected to ill-treatment during his arrest.

On 23 March 2006, Mr. **Larbi le Moussamih**, a member of the Sahara Branch of the Moroccan Forum for Truth and Justice (*Forum marocain Vérité et Justice - FMJV*), an organisation that is still not legally recognised, was held under arrest by GUS members for four hours in Laayoun and interrogated at the police station without explanation.

On 24 March 2006, Moroccan police arrested Mrs. **Djimi el Ghalia**, Vice-President of the Saharawi Association of Victims of Gross Human Rights Violations Committed by the Moroccan State (*Association sahraouie des victimes de violations massives des droits de l'homme commises par l'Etat marocain - ASVDHEM*) and member of the Committee of the Families of Disappeared and Former Disappeared Persons, together with her husband Mr. **Dah Mustafa Dafa**, while they were visiting the mother of Mr. **Hmad Hammad**, a Saharawi human rights militant, in Laayoun. Mrs. Djimi el Ghalia and her husband were taken to the Moroccan criminal police station in Laayoun, before being released a few hours later.

NEPAL – Arbitrary arrests / Release 3 February 2006 - NPL 001 / 0206 / OBS 012

On 1 February 2006, Mr. **Charan Prasai**, president of the Human Rights Organisation in Nepal (HURON), along with Mr. **Bijul Biswokarma**, Mr. **Mukund Rijal**, Mr. **Suresh Kumar Bhatta**, Mr. **Narayan Dutta Kande**, Mr. **Basu Devkota** and Mr. **Prakash Bara**, other HURON members, were arrested while they were taking part in a meeting on the occasion of the one-year “anniversary” of the royal take-over in Nepal.

Mr. Bijul Biswokarma, Mr. Mukund Rijal, Mr. Suresh Kumar Bhatta, Mr. Narayan Dutta Kande and Mr. Basu Devkota were all released on 5 February 2006. Mr. Charan Prasai was released on an unknown date a month later. On 8 April 2006, Mr. Charan Prasai was again arrested in Maharajgunj during a demonstration in support of democracy in Nepal and would remain detained in an Armed Police Force (APF) barracks in Duwakot (Bhaktapur), after receiving a three-month detention order under the Public Security Act (PSA).

PAKISTAN – Attacks / Harassment 20 January 2006 - PAK 001 / 0106 / OBS 009

On 8 January 2006, members of a delegation mandated by the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), including Mrs. **Asma Jahangir**, HRCP chairperson, Mr. **Afrasiab Khattak**, former HRCP chairperson, Mr. **Munizae Jahangir**, a journalist, and Mr. **Muhammad Nadeem**, a cameraman, were attacked in the Balochistan region, in the south-west of the country. The mission aimed at monitoring the deterioration of the human rights situation in Balochistan subsequent to military operations carried out by Pakistani armed forces on 17 December 2005. Three charges of Kalashnikov were fired during the attack, but none of the delegation members was hurt.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) then called the Quetta Club to claim responsibility for the attack, although this action is not typical of the organisation, which normally makes this kind of claims via its website.

No action has been taken following the filing of a complaint by the HCRP delegates.

PERU - Death threats / Harassment 10 January 2006 - PER 001 / 0106 / OBS 003

On 3 January 2006, Mrs. **Iscra Chávez Loaiza**, director of the Association for Human Life and Dignity (*Asociación por la Vida y la Dignidad Humana - APORVIDHA*), received by phone death threats against herself and her children.

On 4 January 2006, the organisation received a second message insulting and intimidating two organisation members, lawyers Mr. **Freddy Rodríguez Olivera** and Mrs. **Evelyn Zevallos Enriquez**.

APORVIDHA is working in particular on the killing of 34 peasants in Lucmahuaycco in 1984, which may have been carried out by members of the 44th Command of the former police force serving in the province of La Convención in the department of Cuzco. Members of the Peruvian army posted in the province of Andahuaylas in the department of Apurímac may also have been involved.

PERU – Slander / Harassment 26 January 2006 – Press release

On 19 January 2006, Mr. Robinson González Campos, a member of the Supreme Court, president of the Academy of Magistrates and former president of the First Transitional Criminal Chamber of the Supreme Court, stated to the

national newspaper *El Expreso* that the real interests of human rights defenders were “by nature economic and political” and that they “do not defend human rights but [...] their financial interests and political and demagogic goals”.

On 20 January 2006, the chairman of the Congress Finance Commission, Mr. Javier Velásquez Quesquén, stated to the same newspaper that “NGOs defend more their own interests than human rights”, adding amongst other declarations that they “assume a legitimacy that the people has not granted them and claim to subject the public authorities to their purposes, to justify the funding they receive and to fill their pockets”.

On the same day, the president of the Congress Defence Commission, Mr. Luis Ibérico Núñez, asserted, during an interview given to the same newspaper, that the NGOs “cannot claim solely to defend the rights of the victims of violence and leave aside the soldiers and police officers who fight terrorist delinquents”.

On 25 January 2006, the second vice-president of Congress, Mr. Gilberto Díaz, declared in an interview with *El Expreso* that “the NGOs have turned into a power of darkness [that] claims to take the place of the political parties to control the country”.

PUBLICATION OF THE OBSERVATORY ANNUAL REPORT 2005 - Steadfast in Protest 22 March 2006 – Press release

On 22 March 2006, the Observatory published its 2005 Annual Report, entitled *Steadfast in Protest*, which presents the situation of 1,172 defenders repressed, as well as the obstacles to freedom of association in almost 90 countries. It is a true indicator of the state of freedoms of expression and association in the human rights area, and highlights the main tendencies of arbitrariness worldwide, and the fight of those who try to stand up to it.

As shown in the report, even though the legitimacy of the action of human rights defenders is increasingly recognised by the international community, the repression they are subjected to continues and indeed is growing. Techniques of repression are becoming more and more widespread, while the authors of such violations enjoy complete impunity.

The report was launched in Geneva, in the presence of Mrs. Louise Arbour, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, also author of the foreword of the report, as well as in many towns in all regions of the world, thanks to the organisation of press conferences by several of the Observatory local partner organisations.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION – Judicial harassment / Sentencing 16 January 2006 – Press release 3 February 2006 – Press release

On 11 January 2006, Mr. Vladimir Demidov, Prosecutor for the Nizhny Novgorod region, said he was convinced that Mr. **Stanislav Dmitrievsky**, editor in chief of the newspaper *Pravozaschita* and executive director of the Russian-Chechen Friendship Society (RCFS), who was being prosecuted for “incitement to hatred or hostility”, would be found guilty, explaining that his office was going to “press for the measures of the criminal liability to be applied against him” and that the public powers should not “allow any attempt to destabilise the situation”.

On 3 February 2006, the Sovetsky District Criminal Court in Nizhny Novgorod sentenced M. Dmitrievsky to a two-year suspended sentence and to a four-year probation period. During this period, he will be banned from changing his main residence, and will have to report regularly to the local authorities. On 10 April 2006, the appeals lodged by Mr. Dmitrievsky and the prosecutor against this decision was rejected by the Regional Court of Nizhny Novgorod.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION – Obstacles to the freedom of association 20 January 2006 – Press release

On 17 January 2006, the law entitled “Amendments to certain Federal Laws of the Russian Federation”, adopted by Parliament on 23 December 2005, was signed by Mr. Vladimir Putin, President of the Republic.

This law, which came into effect on 10 April 2006, is evidence of the very clear wish to control and muzzle the independent organisations and to limit the presence of international NGOs on Russian territory. It represents a real threat for civil society as a whole, even though several very restricting provisions were removed after its first reading in the Lower House on 23 November 2005, due to national and international pressure.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION – Defamation 26 January 2006 – Press release

On 22 and 23 January 2006, Mr. Sergey Ignatchenko, official representative of the Federal Security Bureau (FSB), accused, in several documentaries broadcast on two State television channels, several human rights NGOs, including the Helsinki Group of Moscow, the Nizhny Novgorod Committee against Torture, the Centre for Democracy and Human Rights and the Eurasia Foundation, of being financed by the British intelligence services. These organisations

denied the accusations and stated that the grants they received were related with the carrying out of specific projects and completely legal.

These allegations are all the more worrying as they could justify the closure of organisations by the government under the new law entitled “Amendments to certain federal laws of the Russian Federation”.

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION - Publication of a mission report
3 March 2006 – Press release**

On 3 March 2006, the Observatory published a fact-finding mission report entitled *Russian Federation: attacks on human rights defenders in Saint Petersburg, Russian authorities guilty of negligence*. This report is the result of a mission sent to Saint-Petersburg in June 2005, in the context of an increasing climate of hostility against human rights defenders, characterised by the multiplication, over the past two years, of physical attacks against them - including assassinations - and by numerous assaults on associations’ offices. This hostile atmosphere goes hand in hand with a growth in xenophobia, racism and anti-Semitism in Russia directed at foreigners and minorities, and, *de facto*, at the defenders of their rights.

This phenomenon, prevalent in Saint-Petersburg, not only comes from extremist groups but is also present within public administration departments, political and judicial institutions. The mission aimed at analysing the public response to these attacks, by making light upon the functioning of the law enforcement and administrative bodies, in order to understand the impunity enjoyed by the aggressors of human rights defenders.

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION - Harassment
14 March 2006 – Open letter to the authorities**

On 26 February 2006, the *Prokuratura* issued a written warning against Mrs. **Elena Zhemkova**, executive director of the human rights organisation Memorial, for “an intolerable breach of the law”, on the basis of article 1 of the “Law on countering extremist activities”. This warning followed the publication on Memorial’s website of an expertise on four leaflets issued by Hizb-Ut-Tahrir, a Muslim organisation banned in Russia. This expertise had been asked by Mrs. **Svetlana Gannushkina**, board member of Memorial and of the Committee for Civil Assistance, to check the legal basis of dozens criminal cases opened since autumn 2004 against Russian citizens, prosecuted for having kept, read or published documents of the Hizb-Ut-Tahrir.

The *Prokuratura* based its warning on the conclusions of a “socio-psychological” study, which, however, was never published nor shown to Memorial, and the authors of which were never identified.

**SUDAN – Harassment
27 January 2006 – Press Release**

On 22 January 2006, security forces prevented 35 human rights activists from leaving the conference centre where they had participated in a forum, which was organised jointly by the Sudan Organisation Against Torture (SOAT), the International Refugee Rights Initiative and the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development (KCHRED), in connection with 6th African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government. The security forces said that the meeting was “unauthorised”, and asked the names of all participants, some of whom were pushed, threatened, insulted or aggressed. Furthermore, working documents, computers and personal documents were confiscated.

The activists were finally “released” under pressure from international representatives, without any charge being held against them. Nevertheless, for several weeks after, participants in the forum were regularly followed and their activities watched by the Sudanese security forces.

**SUDAN - Obstacles to the freedom of association
16 February 2006 – Press release
7 March 2006 – Joint Press Release**

On 20 February 2006, the Sudanese Parliament adopted in second reading the “Organisation of Humanitarian Voluntary Work Act”. The bill had been rejected in first reading on 13 February 2006, following the approval by the National Council of Ministers of a report submitted by its Humanitarian Affairs Committee, which had stressed that amendments would be necessary for the bill to be adopted.

Although several restrictive provisions were withdrawn from the initial text, the amended version still contains serious restrictions to freedom of association in Sudan, in particular increased control and interference of the authorities in the activities of the local or international NGOs active in the field of human rights or humanitarian action. Furthermore, the act contains a certain number of measures facilitating the suspension of the activities of an organisation, its closure or dissolution, and also the expulsion of foreign members of the staff.

SUDAN – Arbitrary arrest / Release
14 March 2006 – SDN 001 / 0306 / OBS 027

On 10 March 2006, Mr. **Hussain Osman Mohamed Ismail**, *alias* Hussain Zikir, a student and member of the SOAT network of students, was arrested by members of the military intelligence service in Toker, Eastern Sudan, where he had been carrying out an enquiry since 6 March 2006 on several cases of violations committed in the village in 1997. On 18 March 2006, Mr. Hussain Osman Mohamed Ismail was released without any charge being held against him, after the intelligence services had confiscated all documents relating to his activities in the field of education and the promotion of human rights.

SUDAN – Obstacle to the freedom of association / Harassment
16 March 2006 – SDN 002 / 0306 / OBS 030

On 11 March 2006, the Humanitarian Aid Commission (HAC), a government agency that oversees all humanitarian organisations in Sudan, issued a formal note to the directors of the offices of the Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO) in Zallingei and Geneina, ordering the suspension of all their activities in the province of West Darfur.

In another letter, of the same date, the HAC, referring to the new legislation on the organisation of humanitarian voluntary work, gave additional instructions concerning the suspension of activities and seizure of assets belonging to the SUDO offices. The HAC reportedly also sent a letter to the Agricultural Bank, ordering it to close the account of the SUDO office at Zalleingei and to cease all transactions as of 13 March 2006.

SYRIA – Arbitrary detention / Release
15 March 2006 – SYR 001 / 0306 / OBS 028
17 March 2006 – SYR 001 / 0306 / OBS 028.1

On 12 March 2006, Mr. **Ammar Qurabi**, media manager for the Arab Organisation for Human Rights – Syria (AOHR – S), was arrested by the Syrian security forces at the Damascus international airport, on his return from two conferences on human rights and democratic reforms in Syria, which were held in Paris (France) and in Washington D.C. (United States). Mr. Qurabi was then brought to the “Palestine branch” of the military intelligence services in Damascus, a place known for its very harsh conditions of detention.

On 16 March 2006, Mr. Qurabi was released. No information was given concerning possible charges held against him.

THAILAND – Forced disappearance / Sentencing
9 January 2006 – Publication of a mission report
16 January 2006 – THA 001 / 0106 / OBS 005

From 14 to 18 December 2005, the Observatory sent a representative to Bangkok to observe the trial of five policemen who were prosecuted in relation to the disappearance of Mr. **Somchai Neelaphajit**, president of the Muslim Lawyers Association and vice-president of the Human Rights Committee of the Lawyers Association of Thailand, who disappeared during the night of 12 to 13 March 2004.

On 12 January 2006, the Bangkok Criminal Court sentenced Mr. Ngern Tongasuk, one of the five policemen, to three years’ imprisonment. The four others were acquitted for lack of proof. Mr. Ngern Tongasuk was found guilty of having forced Mr. Somchai into a car and of having “physically forced another person into submission” under article 309 of the Penal Code. As forced disappearance is not recognised as a criminal offence in Thailand, in June 2004 the police officers had been charged with “gang-robbery” of Mr. Somchai’s vehicle and of some personal belongings, and with having “physically forced another person into submission”.

THAILAND – Acquittal / Judicial proceedings
17 March 2006 – THA 002 / 0306 / OBS 032

On 15 March 2006, Ms. **Supinya Klangnarong**, Secretary general of the Campaign for Popular Media Reform (CPMR), and the newspaper *Thai Post* were acquitted by the Bangkok Criminal Court in a lawsuit brought against them by Shin Corporation, a media conglomerate founded by the Prime Minister Mr. Thaksin Shinawatra. Since August 2003, Ms. Supinya Klangnarong had been prosecuted for “criminal defamation” (article 328 of the Penal Code) after having alleged, in an article published by the *Thai Post* on 16 July 2003, that the profits of Shin Corp had risen significantly since Mr. Thaksin Shinawatra had become Prime Minister. Ms. Supinya was facing a fine of 200,000 Baht (4,000 euros) and a two years’ prison sentence.

Furthermore, on 9 May 2006, Shin Corp withdrew its civil defamation suit against Ms. Supinya Klangnarong and the Thai Post newspaper. Indeed, on 24 August 2004, Shin Corp had also initiated a civil libel action for 400 million Bhat (over 8 million euros) against Ms. Supinya and the *Thai Post*, following the approval of the Criminal Court. On 11 October 2004, the Civil Court decided that the trial would begin after the Criminal Court had handed down its ruling.

TUNISIA – Judicial proceedings / Harassment
2 February 2006 – Joint open letter to the authorities¹

On 25 February 2006, the hearing on the substance in the case of the Executive Committee of the Tunisian League for Human Rights (*Ligue tunisienne des droits de l'Homme* - LTDH) vs. the two claimants who had maintained their claim (the 20 others having withdrawn theirs on 12 November 2005), was once again postponed, to 6 May 2006. The case had already been postponed twice (on 12 November and 24 December 2005).

On 5 September 2005, the Tunis Court of First Instance, in a summary judgement, ordered LTDH “to suspend the holding of its Congress, planned for the 9, 10 and 11 September 2005” and “all preparatory work aimed at facilitating its convening (...) until a final decision has been handed in the procedure on the substance, with immediate execution”. These proceedings resulted from a joint demand by 22 persons alleging to be LTDH members, but known as members or sympathisers of the Democratic Constitutional Party (*Rassemblement constitutionnel démocratique* - RCD, ruling party). At the same time, the 22 persons had instigated judicial proceedings on the substance of the case before the Civil Chamber of the Tunis Court of First Instance in order to obtain the cancellation of the convening of the 6th LTDH Congress, which had been launched by the Executive Committee.

TUNISIA – Arbitrary detention / Harassment / Ill-treatment / Hunger strike
24 March 2006 – Press Release
30 March 2006 – Press Release

Mr. **Mohamed Abbou**, a member of the National Council for Liberties in Tunisia (*Conseil national pour les libertés en Tunisie* (CNLT) and of the International Association for the Support of Political Prisoners (*Association internationale pour le soutien des prisonniers politiques*, AISSP), who is detained since 1 March 2005 in the Kef prison for having published on the Internet an article denouncing the conditions of detention in Tunisia, is still subjected to harassment. Thus, on 23 March 2006, his children, his wife and his mother were refused permission to visit him, while the Kef prison is more than 250 km from their home. Furthermore, Mrs. Samia Abbou, returning from Geneva (Switzerland), was searched at the airport and a photograph of her husband was confiscated.

On 11 March 2006, Mr. Mohamed Abbou started a hunger strike in order to protest against his conditions of detention. Mr. Abbou put an end to his hunger strike around 15 April 2006.

On 19 March 2006, Mr. Abbou was subjected to ill-treatment after having refused to share a cell with several common law criminals. Furthermore, on 30 March 2006, Mr. Abbou lost consciousness while his wife and daughter were visiting him.

Furthermore, Mr. **Ali Ben Salem**, vice-president of the Association for the Fight against Torture in Tunisia (*Association de lutte contre la torture en Tunisie* - ALTT) and Bizerta representative of LTDH, has been under house arrest since 9-10 November 2005, without any warrant having been presented to him.

UZBEKISTAN - Arbitrary detention / Sentencing / Release
14 March 2006 - UZB 001 / 0306 / OBS 026

On 6 March 2006, Mrs. **Mukhtabar Tojibaeva**, president of the “Ardent Hearts Club”, a human rights organisation based in Margilan in the Fergana valley, was sentenced to a eight-year prison sentence by the court of Dustobod, Urta Chirchik rayon court, in Tashkent oblast, for 17 charges - mostly economic - including “slander” (article 139.3 of the Criminal Code) and “membership of an illegal organisation” (article 244) on the grounds that the Ardent Hearts Club would not be registered under the “Law on Amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Administrative Liability concerning NGOs”, adopted on 28 December 2005. Many irregularities marred the judicial proceedings.

Furthermore, on 11 January 2006, four human rights defenders were sentenced for “infringement on President’s life” (article 158-3 of the Criminal Code), “undermining the constitutional order” (article 159-3), “preparing and distributing material threatening public order” (article 244-1.3) and “membership in an religious extremist organisation” (article 244-1). Mr. **Dilmurad Muhitdinov**, president of the Markhamat branch of Ezgulik, a human rights NGO, was sentenced to five years of imprisonment. Mr. **Akbarali Oripov**, a member of Ezgulik, Mr. **Mussajon Bobojanov**, a member of Ezgulik and president of the local political organisation Birlik, and Mr.

¹ This letter was jointly sent by the Observatory, the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), the International Commission of Jurists and Human Rights Watch.

Nurmuhammad Azizov, president of the Andijan branch of the Human Rights Society of Uzbekistan (HRSU), were sentenced to three years of probation, before being released. The four men were held at the Tashkent prison.

ZIMBABWE – Death Threats / Arbitrary arrests / Judicial proceedings / Harassment
27 January 2006 – ZWE 001 / 0106 / OBS 011

On 21 January 2006, two police officers and one soldier raided the domicile of Mr. **Arnold Tsunga**, president of the Zimbabwe Human Rights Association (Zimrights), executive director of Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights (ZLHR), and a trustee of the *Voice of the People* (VOP), an independent radio station, in Mutare. As Mr. Tsunga was absent, the police officers took the two servants who were present to the police station.

On 24 January 2006, Mr. Tsunga and five other VOP trustees, Mr. **David Masunda**, Mr. **Millicent Phiri**, Mr. **Lawrence Chibwe**, Mr. **Nhlahla Ngwenya** and Ms. **Isabella Matambanadzo**, were arrested and charged with “broadcasting without a licence”, an offence liable to two years’ imprisonment. Pending the trial, which was postponed from 10 to 28 February, and then to 26 April 2006, the six persons were released on bail.

Furthermore, on 26 January 2006 an unknown man went to Zimrights office, asking to speak to Mr. Tsunga, who was not there at the time. The man, who seemed to be linked to the army, explained that the members of the Zimbabwe Military Intelligence Corps (ZIC) would have received the order to kill Mr. Tsunga.

ZIMBABWE – Arbitrary arrest and detentions
14 February 2006 – ZWE 002 / 0206 / OBS 015

On 13 February 2006, approximately 181 persons, mainly women, who were demonstrating under the banner of the NGO Women of Zimbabwe Arise (WOZA), along with 14 children, were arrested in central Bulawayo, as they were dispersing from a peaceful protest against the human rights violations. Four WOZA leaders, Ms. **Jennifer Williams**, Ms. **Magodonga Mahlangu**, Ms. **Emily Mpofo** and Ms. **Maria Moyo** were among the persons arrested, and their fingerprints were taken by the police. The detainees were charged with “organising an illegal gathering” and “obstructing the free flow of traffic”, before being released on bail on 17 May 2006. However, the charges held against them have not been dropped. Their trial is said to resume on 12 June 2006.

Furthermore, on 14 February 2006, more than twenty heavily armed police officers arrested from 60 to 100 women from WOZA, in Harare, while they were participating in a peaceful protest against economic and social inequalities faced by women in Zimbabwe. The women were rounded up and callously loaded into Harare municipal police trucks, and taken to the police station. Mr. **Tafadzwa Mugabe**, a lawyer from the ZLHR rapid reaction unit, was harassed, insulted and then detained for several hours with his clients, before being released without any charge being held against him.

Geneva - Paris, May 2006

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