

## **Amnesty International Report 2008 State of the World's Human Rights**

**Foreign nationals, including migrants and asylum-seekers, were held in detention for unacceptably long periods and in poor conditions without access to a judicial or other independent review. Some reported being beaten by police upon arrest or by guards once detained. Asylum-seekers reported a number of irregularities in the asylum procedure that could have jeopardized their applications or their families at home. An organization supporting and advising migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers was the target of a racist attack and its chairperson charged in connection with its fundraising activities.**

### **Detention and ill-treatment of foreign nationals**

Foreign nationals were held in prolonged administrative detention without the opportunity for appeal before a judicial or similar independent body, in violation of the right not to be arbitrarily deprived of one's liberty. In late September and early October detainees in Block 10 of Nicosia Central Prison, which served as a police detention centre for rejected asylum-seekers who were under deportation orders, protested against the length and conditions of their detention. Several had been held for over 30 months.

Interviewees reported that the conditions in which they were detained were poor and that guards had subjected them to cruel and degrading treatment, including refusing them food and water during the protest. Several alleged that they had been ill-treated by police upon arrest or by guards in detention.

- The authorities attempted to deport a Sierra Leonean national originally arrested for illegal stay in February 2005. His application for asylum, still pending when his detention began, had been rejected without him being informed or given the opportunity to challenge the decision. At the end of the year he was still in detention.
- An Iranian national stated that he had been beaten by police upon arrest, then again by guards at the Central Prison whilst on a hunger strike protest in 2006, and a third time during the September-October protests. He stated that following the first beating in August 2005, he had developed a swelling on his head and problems focusing and balancing, and that he had been denied permission for an operation recommended by the doctor who examined him. He also stated that he had previously been detained for nine months in the Lykavitos police station where he was not allowed out into the yard, his cell was overcrowded and there were no adequate hygiene facilities.

By the end of 2007, no response had been received from the Cypriot authorities to Amnesty International's letter expressing concerns.

### **Human rights defenders**

In April the European Network Against Racism reported that the headquarters of its branch in Cyprus, the non-governmental organization Action for Equality, Support and Anti-racism (Kinisi yia Isotita, Styrixi, Antiratsismo – KISA) had been sprayed

with swastikas and nationalistic slogans. KISA offers support and legal advice to migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in Cyprus. Its chairperson faced prosecution in October for the second time in five years on criminal charges relating to the organization's fundraising, in what may have been an attempt to hinder the organization in its work.

## **Amnesty International visit**

- Amnesty International visited Cyprus in October.