

SURINAME

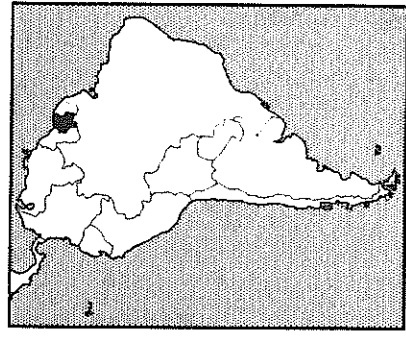
VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS



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MAP OF SURINAME



GUYANA

PARAMARIBO

Wanhati ●

Mungo ●

Morakondre ●

Mungotapu ●

Moolwana ●

Alima ●

Apatou ●

● St Laurent

● Acarouany

FRENCH GUIANA

SURINAME

BRAZIL

T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background to killings	1
1.2 Refugees	2
1.3 Sources of information	3
1.4 Findings	3
1.5 Government acknowledgement	4
1.6 Amnesty International's approach to the government	4
1.7 Recommendations	5
1.8 SURINAME's INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS	6
2. KILLINGS, ARRESTS AND DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL	7
2.1 KILLINGS	7
2.1.1 The shooting of Cakwa Kastiel	7
2.1.2 Allegations of killings in Mooiwana	8
2.1.2.1 Witnesses' testimonies	8
2.1.3 Allegations of killings in Classkreek	10
2.1.4 Individual cases: reports from other sources	10
2.2 ARRESTS AND DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL	12
2.2.1 Arrests in Mungotapu	12
2.2.2 Arrests in Morakondre	13
2.2.3 Other arrests reported to Amnesty International	13
3. GENERAL BACKGROUND	15
3.1 Bush Negroes	15
3.2 The Government	15
3.3 Judicial System	16
3.4 Amnesty International's previous concerns	16

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN SURINAME

1. INTRODUCTION

This report outlines human rights violations perpetrated by the Government of Suriname since July 1986, when an armed opposition group began operating in the eastern part of the country.

At the beginning of 1987 Amnesty International sent a research mission to French Guiana to investigate reports that unarmed civilians had been killed by Surinamese soldiers in separate incidents in villages in eastern Suriname and in Paramaribo in circumstances suggesting that they were the victims of extrajudicial executions. Amnesty International's delegates visited French Guiana from 31 January to 6 February 1987 and conducted extensive interviews with Surinamese refugees. This report is based partly on testimonies obtained in those interviews. It also includes information which Amnesty International gathered from refugees and others detailing killings in other areas, arrests, detention without charge and incommunicado detention during the same period.

1.1 Background to killings

The Surinamese military government came to power in 1980 as a result of a coup and has since survived several attempted coups. However, since July 1986 it has been the target of concerted armed opposition.

The group opposing the government is known as the Surinamese Liberation Army or Jungle Commando. Most of its members are Bush Negroes, an ethnic group which comprises about 10 percent of the population. It operates in the eastern part of the country - the region inhabited by Bush Negroes - and is backed by Surinamese exiles in The Netherlands. The group is led by Ronny Brunswijk, a 25-year-old former army sergeant and himself a Bush Negro, who was born in the village of Mungotapu.

On 22 July 1986, Ronny Brunswijk and his followers attacked a military post in Albina, 125 km. from Paramaribo. Further attacks took place later in the year. There have been allegations of casualties on both sides as a result of the armed confrontations and entire villages have reportedly been deserted after their inhabitants fled from the areas of armed conflict.

On 1 December 1986 the government imposed a state of emergency, which was approved by the National Assembly, on the southern and eastern regions of the country where the army was engaged in combat with the Jungle

Commando. On 3 December a 6pm to 5am curfew was imposed in the same regions.

The government has stated that although the activities of the armed opposition are disrupting the economy and normal life in Suriname, it is determined to proceed with democratizing the country.

The Jungle Commando has destroyed electricity pylons which reportedly led to the closure of the bauxite mines. This has increased the country's economic problems, creating shortages of various basic products which prompted street demonstrations in Paramaribo in February 1987, following which a number of people were detained for short periods of time.

1.2 Refugees

The internal situation has led to hundreds of Surinamese people, mainly Bush Negroes and Amerindians, crossing the Marowijne River on the Surinamese border to seek refuge in French Guiana. The exodus from eastern Suriname began slowly between late October and early November. However, in early December, after soldiers killed at least 35 people in the village of Mooiwana on 29 November and the fighting escalated, the numbers increased dramatically. By mid-December there were some 4,500 Surinamese refugees in French Guiana, mainly in St Laurent du Maroni.

The total number of Surinamese refugees in French Guiana had risen to 6,771 by the time Amnesty International's mission visited the country. Most were children - probably some 70 per cent - and most of them were young children aged between a few months and about seven years old. Many of the rest were women. Men were a clear minority and most of them were older men.

The refugees in the camps in St Laurent du Maroni, Acarouany and Apatou were all Bush Negroes. Apatou is a transit camp where people stayed briefly on arrival in French Guiana before being moved north to the St Laurent or Acaraouny camps. In February 1987 the French authorities were in the process of setting another refugee camp.

The refugees also included people from the Amerindian communities in eastern Suriname. Amerindians have not been involved in the armed conflict but have been affected by the fighting, and they too have been forced to leave their villages and cross over into French Guiana. They have been well received by indigenous people on the French side of the border and most have been integrated into Indian villages like Balatá on the outskirts of St Laurent rather than being put in special camps, as are the Bush Negroes.

1.3 Sources of information

Amnesty International's delegates interviewed 23 Surinamese refugees in the camps in St Laurent du Maroni, Acarouany, and Apatou. These refugees had come from Morakondre, Mooiwana, Albina, Wanhati and other villages in eastern Suriname, the area most affected by the conflict, and had witnessed human rights violations or else had relatives who had been victims of human rights violations. The delegation also interviewed refugee workers, who were refugees themselves, but were not members of either of the two ethnic groups - Bush Negroes and Amerindians - who constituted the bulk of the refugee population, and others who were well-informed about the situation in Suriname.

1.4 Findings

The information collected by Amnesty International in French Guiana confirmed allegations the organization had already received about extrajudicial executions by the army. One such case was the death of Cakwa Kastiel, a three-year-old boy, on 1 August 1986. He was killed by soldiers who came to the village of Morakondre, apparently looking for members of the Jungle Commando or its leader. The child was allegedly killed in order to frighten people into giving information about the group. According to witnesses, he was shot dead in his mother's arms. No members of the Jungle Commando were in the area nor was anyone shooting at the soldiers (see p.7).

Several refugees testified about the indiscriminate killing of at least 35 people by the army in the village of Mooiwana on 29 November 1986. Most of the victims were women and children. As in the previous incident, the survivors maintained that no members of the Jungle Commando were in the village at the time and that no one was shooting at the soldiers. From the information supplied by refugees Amnesty International has been able to compile a list (see Appendix I) of the names of 31 villagers killed in Mooiwana, identifying 18 of them as female and 12 as male - the sex of one not being known. Nineteen of these victims were children under 18, and some of them were young children only a few months or years old. Three of the women were pregnant. This figure does not include four unidentified victims.

Amnesty International's delegates were also told that a group of teenagers and young men were killed in Classkreek, Brokopondo, in mid-December. According to reports the army came to a football pitch where the young people were playing football. They were made to lie on the ground and were then shot by the soldiers. (see p. 10).

Another killing reported to Amnesty International was that of Henkie Maisa, a 16 year-old student. He was allegedly killed in October at his home in Paramaribo by soldiers who did not explain why they had come for him (see p. 11).

The refugees were unable to confirm an allegation that some 15 people had been killed in mid-January in Wanhati, a village near Mungo. The reports of this incident were contradictory and only one refugee testified about the incident, saying that two people were killed when soldiers raided the village on 12 January.

Amnesty International was also concerned by reports of numerous arrests and detention without trial. Many Bush Negroes are reported to have been arrested on the grounds that they were supporters of the Jungle Commando. Those detained have not been charged with any criminal offence and have been denied access to lawyers and their relatives. Some of those arrested after July 1986 were released a few months later but others are still held without charge or trial.

1.5 Government acknowledgement

The government has publicly acknowledged some of the killings but it has denied that they were extrajudicial executions. For example, it claimed that Cakwa Kastiel, the child killed in Morakondre, had been caught in crossfire between government and rebel forces.

The government has also acknowledged the killings in Mooiwana on 29 November. According to press reports, Lieutenant Colonel Bouterse said in a speech to a political rally on 12 December that civilians had been killed in a recent army offensive against the Jungle Commando but claimed that they had been told to leave the area beforehand.

Earlier, on 7 December, the then Prime Minister, Pretapnaarian Radhakishun, had made the following comment on the killings in Mooiwana: "If violence is combatted by force then it is logical that there would be victims". He said that in armed conflicts there were bound to be civilian as well as military casualties. However, Amnesty International is concerned because the evidence in this case does not suggest that the victims were accidental casualties of the conflict, but that they were deliberately killed because of their suspected support for the rebel group and their ethnic origin.

The government also acknowledged the killing of Henkie Maisa but claimed that he had been killed in a police station in Paramaribo and that the police had been forced to shoot him because he had tried to seize a gun.

1.6 Amnesty International's approach to the government

Following its mission, Amnesty International telexed the Surinamese Government on 17 February 1987 with details of its concerns. The organization asked whether the government had conducted an inquiry into the reported killings and, if so, to inform Amnesty International what methods

were used and what the findings had been. Amnesty International also expressed concern over reports that a number of people detained in connection with the armed conflict were in military prisons without having been charged or tried, unable to see lawyers or their families (see p. 12). The organization urged the government to make public a list of all detainees and to either charge them with recognizable criminal offences or else release them. It also appealed for them to be allowed visits by their families and legal assistance. The organization has received no reply.

1.7 Recommendations

In view of the concerns documented in this report Amnesty International respectfully calls upon the Government of Suriname:

1. to conduct an immediate, thorough and independent inquiry into the killings documented in this report and make the findings public;
2. to prosecute those found to have been responsible for these human rights violations;
3. to grant compensation to the families of those killed who are not proved to have been combatants;
4. to make public the names, date of arrest and place of detention of all those arrested as a result of the present conflict or because of their real or alleged opposition to the government;
5. to ensure that all detainees are promptly charged and brought to court or else released, and that they have access to lawyers and their relatives.

1.8 SURINAME'S INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS

Surinamese law recognizes the right to life and personal security. Furthermore, Suriname has acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and its Optional Protocol and is a member of the Organization of American States (OAS), although it has not signed the American Convention on Human Rights (ACHR). According to Article 6 of the ICCPR:

"Every human being has the inherent right to life. This right shall be protected by law. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his life."

As a member of the OAS, Suriname is bound by the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man, Article 1 of which states:

"Every human being has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

The Surinamese Government is also in violation of Article 9 of the ICCPR which states:

"1. Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as are established by law.

"2. Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him."

and Article XXV of the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man:

"No person may be deprived of his liberty except in the cases and according to the procedures established by pre-existing laws....

"Every individual who has been deprived of his liberty has the right to have the legality of his detention ascertained without delay by a court, and the right to be tried without undue delay or, otherwise, to be released. He also has the right to humane treatment during the time he is in custody."

2. KILLINGS, ARRESTS AND DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL

This chapter contains information gathered by Amnesty International in French Guiana from Surinamese refugees as well as information the organization has obtained from other sources, either in French Guiana or The Netherlands, or from reports it has been sent. The chapter is in two parts: the first part gives details of killings in three Bush Negro villages in eastern Suriname and accounts of killing of several people in Paramaribo and elsewhere; the second part gives information about arrests and detention without trial.

2.1 KILLINGS

2.1.1 The shooting of Cakwa Kastiel

On 1 August 1986 a three-year-old boy, Cakwa Kastiel, was reportedly shot dead in his mother's arms by soldiers in Morakondre, a Bush Negro village in eastern Suriname.

At about 3pm on 1 August soldiers entered Morakondre, apparently searching for supporters of Ronny Brunswijk, leader of the Jungle Commando. According to written reports, the soldiers shot the child in order to frighten villagers into giving information about the whereabouts of Ronny Brunswijk's men.

A woman from Morakondre, who is now a refugee in St Laurent du Maroni, testified to Amnesty International's delegates that she had witnessed soldiers killing the child. She saw the mother with the child in her arms when the soldiers shot him. Other women were running away from them. She also stated that on the same day soldiers arrested a number of people in the village (see Section 2.2).

She said that after this incident army helicopters often came to the village and fired at random but that no one was killed. Most villagers left their homes and moved away from Morakondre. She left in December 1986.

The official version of this incident was that the child had been killed in an exchange of fire between the army and Ronny Brunswijk's forces. However, several people have stated that neither Ronny Brunswijk nor his men were in Morakondre on that day and that no one else had attacked the soldiers.

2.1.2 Allegations of killings in Mooiwana

Mooiwana is a village situated a few km. west of Albina, a mining town in eastern Suriname. According to witnesses, on the afternoon of 29 November 1986 soldiers came to the village on the grounds that they were looking for Ronny Brunswijk's men. They surrounded the village and started shooting indiscriminately, killing a number of people. They also burned down houses. Witnesses state that there were no men from the Jungle Commando in the village.

2.1.2.1 Witnesses' testimonies

The following testimonies about the killings in Mooiwana were obtained by Amnesty International's delegates in interviews with Surinamese refugees in French Guiana.

Twenty-four-year-old woman

This woman lived in Mooiwana and was there with her family when the soldiers came. They took her father away and killed him. He was a basia* in the village. Her aunt, who was seven months pregnant, was shot.

She hid in her house to save her two children - who were about one and three years old. When the soldiers entered the house she struggled with one of them, clutching his shirt and implored them not to kill her or her children (she had her baby in her arms). The soldier fired and injured her left foot. Amnesty International's delegates could see a distinct scar on the upper part of her foot where she said she had been shot.

Eight members of her family were killed in the incident and she estimated that another 20 or 30 people had been killed.

She also witnessed the killing of a seven-month-old child. The child was in his mother's arms when a soldier put a gun in his mouth and shot him dead.

* The highest authority of the Bush Negro organization is vested in a Granman; below him there are captains, then basias who act as advisers to the captains. The delegates were repeatedly told that Basia Divinjo was wearing his official uniform when he was shot by the soldiers. The uniform has a special significance for Bush Negroes, and those testifying thought the army should have respected it since they are aware of its meaning. It identifies the person wearing it as someone of special status.

Twenty-five-year old man

This man testified that on Saturday 29 November soldiers came to the village. He was indoors when they started firing at his house. He took his two children (a baby and a two to three-year-old) and hid under the bed. His wife did not manage to take cover in time and was shot. She fell very

near to where he was hiding, but he was afraid to come out from under the bed in case the soldiers saw him and shot him too. His wife died about an hour later. He wrapped her in a blanket and, taking the children, he left the house and hid in the forest.

Nora, a 43-year-old woman

Nora was in her house when the shooting started. With her baby in her arms she opened the door and told the soldiers they must not shoot the baby. She pleaded for her children not to be killed. The soldiers threw a grenade which landed near her. A boy picked it up and threw it back at the soldiers. The grenade exploded, injuring one of them. In reprisal, the soldiers shot another boy (not the one who had thrown back the grenade nor one of her sons). She fled into the forest and came to St Laurent with a group of about 150 people.

Sixty-year-old man

This man was in his house when soldiers opened the door and told him and his wife to run. They started running but she was shot in the leg. She tried to crawl to the safety of the forest and managed to advance a few metres but was then shot in the head and killed by a soldier. The soldiers continued firing at the man but he managed to escape.

Ten people were killed in and around his house. He said that after the killings houses were burned down with bodies still inside them, although he could not say how many there were.

Woman witness

A woman who did not wish to be named stated that she had witnessed the killing of Misidjan Divinjo who was a basia in Mooiwana. According to her testimony he had argued with the soldiers when they ordered him to get out of his house. He had said that it was his house and he refused to obey their orders. The soldiers then shot him but he did not die instantly. They finally killed him with machetes.

Elderly woman

This elderly woman, who had nothing left but her dress, is the mother and grandmother of 16 of the people killed in Mooiwana. When the soldiers came to the village she was working in the fields with several of her grandchildren - a circumstance which saved their lives. She went back to the village when the soldiers had left and found the bodies of her relatives. She gave Amnesty International's delegates a list of their names (see Appendix II). She had to hide in the forest for two nights with eight children aged between two and 16 years before they could cross over into French Guiana.

Other sources

According to some sources in French Guiana, 10 of the victims, five women and five children, were lined up by the army and shot. Amnesty International has also received reports about this incident from other sources, including the press and testimonies given by Surinamese refugees in The Netherlands.

2.1.3 Allegations of killings in Classkreek

Amnesty International has received reports from contacts in The Netherlands about the killing in December of 10 to 13 young people who were playing on a football pitch in Classkreek, Brokoondo. Reliable sources in French Guiana testified to Amnesty International's delegates that they were told of these killings in conversations with local residents. Soldiers allegedly ordered the youths to lie on the ground and then shot them. They were aged between 16 and 20.

2.1.4 Individual cases: reports from other sources

The following reports from sources other than the refugees interviewed in French Guiana concern individuals allegedly killed by the military.

Amnesty International is concerned that these killings have not been the subject of a thorough, independent investigation, particularly considering the disturbing circumstances in which they occurred and the contradictions between the versions given by police and witnesses and the victims' relatives.

David Spalburg

David Spalburg, an army conscript, died in July 1986. The official explanation of his death was that he had committed suicide by shooting himself. However, those mortuary workers who saw his body told his family that it bore marks of ill-treatment or torture: his neck was broken and his upper thigh was very swollen. It has been suggested that he might have been killed because he had compromising information about internal army problems or because he had complained about something, but Amnesty International's delegates could not obtain further details of this. At the time of his death the army was undergoing internal re-organization and two leading members of the high command were dismissed from their government posts. Amnesty International received information about this case from a source close to David Spalburg's family. The organization is disturbed by the great differences between the authorities' explanation of his death and the information given to his relatives. The organization considers that there should be a thorough investigation into the circumstances of his death and particularly into the cause of the wounds allegedly noticed on his corpse.

Henkie Maisa

Amnesty International also received information about a killing in Paramaribo in circumstances suggesting it had been an extrajudicial execution. According to this report, at about 10pm on 18 October 1986 military police cars drew up outside the house of the Maisa family in Paramaribo. Military police entered the house and searched Henkie Maisa, a 16-year-old student. His mother requested an explanation but was ordered out of the room; however she stayed and watched. The military police then took Henkie Maisa into his bedroom and ordered him to lie on the floor, which he did. He tried to crawl under a cupboard to hide but was immediately shot four times. He died instantly. His family was given no reason why the boy was searched and killed.

In reports which appeared in the Suriname press and on television the government claimed that Henkie Maisa had used abusive language and had been taken to a police station. There he had tried to get a gun [presumably from a police officer] and the police had therefore shot him.

However, according to a written statement by a Surinamese individual (who requested not to be identified for fear of retaliation) the boy was killed in his own home and many neighbours witnessed the army operation. The author of this statement claimed that when s/he had visited the house on the Sunday morning at Ms. Maisa's request, s/he had seen blood on the walls of the room where Henkie Maisa had reportedly been killed. This person obtained details about the incident from neighbours and included these in the report sent to Amnesty International.

Amnesty International is again concerned by the disparity between the authorities' version of events and that of friends and relatives. The organization would urge the government to initiate an inquiry that may reveal the exact circumstances of Henkie Maisa's death.

Kenneth Geldrop, Guro Ravenberg, Leender Hongerbron, Louis Kromopawiro

On 17 or 18 October 1986 Kenneth Geldrop, Guro Ravenberg, Leender Hongerbron and Louis Kromopawiro were allegedly killed outside Paramaribo after being arrested at their homes by the army. Three were Surinamese soldiers and one was a civilian. Two of the soldiers were Bush Negroes. They were allegedly driven to the outskirts of the capital where they were made to get out of the vehicle and walk to the forest. Subsequently, a person who has asked not to be identified and who now lives abroad claimed to have seen their bodies in the mortuary riddled with bullet wounds. The government maintained that they had been involved in drug trafficking and that they had been killed in a confrontation between rival gangs.

Amnesty International considers that if government officials were involved in any way in these deaths (even if the victims were engaged in illegal dealings), an inquiry should be held to establish the exact circumstances of the deaths and if it were found that the four men had been extrajudicially executed, those responsible should be brought to

justice.

Henry Izaak Nahar

Henry Nahar, a Surinamese man of Dutch nationality who had settled in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, had in the past been a supporter of Lieutenant Colonel Bouterse but later publicly criticized the military government. He visited Suriname in August 1986 and stayed with his brother-in-law, a former member of the military government. On 24 October 1986 he was due to go to Paramaribo for talks with Lieutenant Colonel Bouterse. The following day he telephoned his wife to say that he was all right. On Monday 28 October his body was recovered from the Commewijne river. An official statement attributed his death to drowning. However, according to the press and other reports, there were six bullet wounds in his body and one eye was out of its socket.

2.2 ARRESTS AND DETENTION WITHOUT TRIAL

In 1986 Amnesty International received frequent reports of arbitrary arrests by the army or the military police in Suriname. These reports came from independent sources and from refugees in French Guiana whose relatives had been arrested and detained without trial.

Amnesty International's informants report that the detainees have not been charged with any criminal offences, have been denied access to lawyers and are usually not allowed to see their families. Some of those arrested have been released but others are still detained, although in some cases relatives have had no news about the imprisoned person for several months.

2.2.1 Arrests in Mungotapu

The first wave of arrests of people suspected of involvement with the armed opposition appears to have been in July 1986 in the village of Mungotapu, where Ronny Brunswijk was born.

According to press reports, on 22 July the Jungle Commando attacked the port of Stolkerstsjer near the mining town of Albina. They seized some weapons and took 11 or 12 soldiers prisoner. Shortly afterwards the Surinamese army launched a major campaign to find the group and its leader, in the course of which houses were allegedly searched and some of them burned down by troops. Women and children were beaten and ill-treated and many young men were taken from the village to Akoentre Velanti barracks in Albina for interrogation about Ronny Brunswijk's whereabouts. Amnesty International does not know where they are and some may still be in detention.

2.2.2 Arrests in Morakondre

Letters from Morakondre inhabitants to relatives or friends abroad, (copies of which were sent to Amnesty International) gave details of arrests in the village after the killing of three-year-old Cakwa Kastiel on 1 August 1986. Soldiers handcuffed and took away 15 or 20 young Bush Negroes, aged between 14 and 20. They were wearing only their underwear, had plastic bags over their heads and were dragged along the ground by the soldiers. The Morakondre villagers saw them being taken to Paramaribo. Some of them were released at Christmas 1986 but the others may still be detained. Amnesty International is concerned by the reports of how they were treated when arrested which, if confirmed, would amount to cruel and inhuman treatment.

One of those arrested in Morakondre was Delano Kastiel, a 16-year-old schoolboy. His sister, who is now a refugee in French Guiana, told Amnesty International's delegates that soldiers picked him up, handcuffed him, shackled his feet and blindfolded him. She said that more than 20 other school students and young people, aged between 16 and 20 were arrested. The soldiers beat them and took their money. Then, she claimed, they were taken to an airfield where they were left in the sun on top of nests of red ants. They were then put in the army barracks. Relatives were told by the army to bring them clothes and food. However, when their relatives took these supplies to the barracks they found that the youths had been moved to Fort Zeelandia in Paramaribo. This witness went to Fort Zeelandia three times. Fort officials told her that her brother was there but gave her no other information about him. When Amnesty International's delegates interviewed her she said that as far as she knew Delano Kastiel was still in Fort Zeelandia and had not been charged.

Amnesty International is concerned that Delano Kastiel appears to have been detained for several months without charge or trial.

2.2.3 Other arrests reported to Amnesty International

Johannes Kanape

Johannes Kanape was born on 5 May 1953 and worked as a factory storekeeper. In July 1986 he acted as guide to two Dutch journalists who were visiting Mungotapu after the army had raided the village. He is reported to have been arrested by soldiers in July 1986 but Amnesty International does not know precisely when or where. The government maintained that the journalists were mercenaries working with the Jungle Commando.

Johannes Kanape's wife, now a refugee in French Guiana, was interviewed by Amnesty International's delegates. She said she had gone to Fort Zeelandia in Paramaribo about 10 times between July and December and that although the army had acknowledged they were holding her husband she had not been allowed to see him. As far as she knew he was still held without charge in Fort Zeelandia.

Stephanus Tienie

Johannes Kanape's wife also gave information about Stephanus Tienie who was arrested at the same time as her husband. Aged 32, he comes from Mungotapu and works for Suralco, a bauxite and aluminium company. He has nine children. He owned the car in which Johannes Kanapé had driven the Dutch journalists and was arrested at the same time. Johannes Kanape's wife did not know where Stephanus Tienie was although she thought that he too was still detained without charge in Fort Zeelandia.

Alex Kate

Alex Kate, a 29-year-old driver from Mungotapu was one of several men arrested by the army after the village was raided in July 1986. He had lent his car to one of Ronny Brunswijk's men who was later shot by soldiers. His mother, who was interviewed by Amnesty International's delegates in French Guiana, said that his sister had spent about two weeks in Paramaribo trying to see him, but was not allowed into Fort Zeelandia. When she gave her testimony Alex Kate's mother did not know whether or not he had been released.

Leo Brunswijk

Leo Brunswijk, a 19-year-old secondary school student, is Ronny Brunswijk's younger brother. According both to a relative who is a refugee in French Guiana and to a close friend of Ronny Brunswijk's living in The Netherlands, Leo Brunswijk was arrested by soldiers in July 1986 near the village of Mungotapu as he was returning home from school. A relative telephoned the family from Paramaribo to say that he was in Fort Zeelandia. Leo Brunswijk was forced to appear on television in October 1986 and was reported to show signs of ill-treatment. He is reportedly still detained in Fort Zeelandia.

Amnesty International is concerned that he has apparently been held for several months without charge or trial.

Karel Cafe Sapelie and R Kablae

Karel Cafe Sapelie, a 27-year-old insurance agent from the Marowijne district who was working in Paramaribo, and R. Kablae, who had a Dutch passport, were arrested by soldiers in mid-December 1986. According to a reliable source in Paramaribo, Karel Sapelie's wife frequently visited both Fort Zeelandia and Moenre Boeke barracks in an attempt to find out what was happening to her husband but she was not successful. Amnesty International does not know why the two men were arrested nor where they are at present.

3. GENERAL BACKGROUND

Suriname is in northeast South America. It is bordered by French Guiana to the east, Guyana to the west, Brazil to the south and the Atlantic Ocean to the north. It covers an area of 163,820 sq. km. and in 1980 it had a population of 354,860 - estimated to have increased to 370,000 by 1984. Suriname's population is very heterogenous: Suriname Creoles (30.8 per cent); Hindustanis (37 per cent); Indonesians (15 per cent); Bush Negroes (10 per cent); Amerindians (2 per cent) and Chinese, Europeans and others (5 per cent). Many Surinamese live in The Netherlands, having emigrated there either at the time of independence in 1975 or else after the change of government in 1980. The official language is Dutch but many different languages are spoken. The main religious groups are Hindus, Roman Catholics, Moslems, Moravian Brethen and other small Christian denominations.

3.1 Bush Negroes

Bush Negroes have become the focus of attention since the emergence of armed opposition to the government led by one of their members. They make up about 10 per cent of the total population of Suriname and live in the eastern and southeastern parts of the country. They are descended from runaway slaves brought from Africa by the Dutch landowners to work on their plantations. To escape the inhumane treatment they received they fled to the jungle in the eastern and southern regions where they established their own communities, retaining their own ancestral culture and social organization, isolated from the rest of the country. The Bush Negroes were legally recognized as a group by the Dutch through treaties only after a very long struggle. Slavery was abolished in 1863.

Bush Negroes still live in their own communities in harmony with other races but without having much contact with them. They have their own political and governmental structure, the highest authority of which is a Granman. There are currently four Granmans, each ruling over a separate region. Below them are the captains, who are authorities at village level. Finally there are the basias, who are the village counsellors to the captains. Bush Negroes have not actively participated in the political life of Suriname. They have their own language, Taki Taki.

3.2 The Government

The head of state is Lieutenant-Colonel Desi Bouterse, who assumed this office in December 1982. He is also the head of the National Military Council. The country is ruled by a Council of Ministers, the military authorities having dissolved Parliament in August 1980.

The 1975 constitution was suspended in August 1980. In late 1984 a committee appointed earlier that year to advise on new democratic

structures suggested the creation of a National Assembly to include members of the labour movement, the business community and the "25 February Movement" - the government's political organization. The National Assembly was inaugurated on 15 January 1985 and was to be in session for 27 months during which time it was to prepare a new constitution, control government spending, create institutions to regulate the country's economy, advise the cabinet and demand accountability from ministers. The draft constitution was approved on 31 March 1987 and is to be voted on in a referendum to be held in September 1987. A general election originally scheduled for March 1988 has been brought forward to 25 November 1987.

3.3 Judicial System

The administration of justice is in the hands of a six-member Court of Justice and three Cantonal Courts. Decrees passed since 1980 have, however, increased the military government's power over the judiciary. With the suspension of the 1975 constitution judges' appointment for life is no longer guaranteed and they are appointed by the military authorities. Although the regular courts retain jurisdiction over ordinary criminal and civil matters, crimes concerning the security of the state now fall under military jurisdiction. According to a decree passed in March 1982, in time of war or state of emergency, civilians charged with attempting to overthrow the government are to be tried by court martial; the death penalty is mandatory on conviction in such cases and there is no right of appeal. The High Court of Military Justice has in fact replaced the Court of Justice as the highest court in matters relating to the security of the state.

3.4 Amnesty International's previous concerns

Amnesty International's concerns in Suriname in the 1980s have been: the ill-treatment of people in military police custody; the summary or extrajudicial execution by the armed forces of alleged government opponents and, more recently, of members of the Bush Negro ethnic group; arrests and incommunicado detention of people accused of involvement in attempted anti-government coups; the alleged infliction of torture during interrogation sessions.

On various occasions the organization has called on the government to investigate allegations of torture or ill-treatment of people in custody but although the government has said that some investigations had been conducted Amnesty International has not seen any reports of such inquiries. The allegations have nearly always named Fort Zeelandia (a compound in Paramaribo which contains a ministry, government departments and a prison with some 50 individual cells), as the place where torture or ill-treatment occurs during incommunicado detention at the hands of the military police.

In 1982, 15 prominent citizens were arrested, reportedly tortured and summarily shot in the early hours of 9 December in Paramaribo. They

included lawyers, journalists and trade union leaders. Amnesty International called for a full government inquiry into the circumstances of the deaths and for its results to be made public. No such inquiry, so far as is known, has been conducted.

The December 1982 killings were the subject of inquiries by the Inter American Commission of Human Rights (IACHR), the Human Rights Committee and by the United Nations Special Rapporteur on summary and arbitrary executions. In 1983 an IACHR report on the situation of human rights in Suriname concluded that "grave violations of the right to life and personal security had occurred".

The Human Rights Committee in its September 1985 report was "... of the view that the victims were arbitrarily deprived of their lives contrary to Article 6 (1) of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights". The IACHR and the Human Rights Committee urged the Surinamese government to thoroughly investigate the December 1982 killings and to prosecute those found responsible.

The Special Rapporteur on summary and arbitrary executions reported in 1985 that "... summary and arbitrary executions took place on the night of 8-9 December in Fort Zeelandia" and that "... the right of life in Suriname cannot be effectively protected unless an independent inquiry is conducted into the killings of December 1982 and the persons who planned and carried out these executions are charged and convicted".

In December 1984, Amnesty International expressed concern to the Minister of Justice over the reported incommunicado detention and ill-treatment of 14 people in military custody. The organization had received reports that up to 90 people had been arrested in November 1983 following an alleged coup attempt. The Minister confirmed that the 14 people named by Amnesty International were among those arrested in November, but denied that as many as 90 people had been detained. Some were later tried on arson charges and sent to prison.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF PEOPLE KILLED IN MOOIWANA ON 29 NOVEMBER 1986

Out of thirty five bodies, thirty one names are known, and details on four are unknown.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>SEX</u>	<u>AGE</u>	
1. Ailisi	F	24	
2. Albert	M	16	
3. Atjilie	F	2	
4. Babaja	M	45	
5. Babij	M	4	
6. Baby van Toeboe	M	7 months	
7. Bambi*		6	
8. Betjo	F	18	Pregnant
9. Betsie	F	27	
10. Bohi	M	5	
11. Divinjo	M	55	
12. Ines	F	3	
13. Irene*	F	25	
14. Iwan	M	8	
15. Joediet	F	22	
16. Johan	M	15	
17. Josevin	F	4	
18. Jurmen	M	3	
19. Katlin*	F	6	
20. Kiki	M	6	
21. Maado	F	35	
22. Magdalena*	F	32	
23. Manpi	M	5	
24. Maoto	F	55	
25. Marelwa*	F	2	
26. Petipa	M	7	
27. Rinia*	F	10	
28. Sakogekie	F	45	
29. Selita	F	8	
30. Siska*	F	19	Pregnant
31. Treesia*	F	17	Pregnant
32. Name unknown			
33. Name unknown			
34. Name unknown			
35. Name unknown			

* These names also appear in the list provided to AI's delegates by an elderly woman in French Guiana.

APPENDIX II

LIST OF PEOPLE KILLED IN MOOIWANA GIVEN TO AI DELEGATES

BY ELDERLY WOMAN IN FRENCH GUIANA

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AGE</u>
1. Bambi	6
2. Celita*	12
3. Ciquista*	1
4. Eric*	3
5. Irene	25
6. Kathlin	10
7. Magda	33
8. Marclua	2
9. Olga*	1
10. Patricia*	15
11. Rinia	10
12. Siska	19 (pregnant)
13. Sonny*	15
14. Stefano*	7
15. Swan*	11
16. Thresia	17 (pregnant)

* These names are not included in Appendix I.

Information from Amnesty International

This paper is part of Amnesty International's publications program. As part of its effort to mobilize world public opinion in defence of the victims of human rights violations, Amnesty International produces a monthly Newsletter, an annual report, and reports, briefings and other documents on countries in all quarters of the globe.

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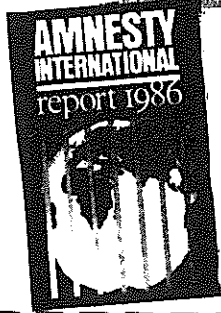
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