

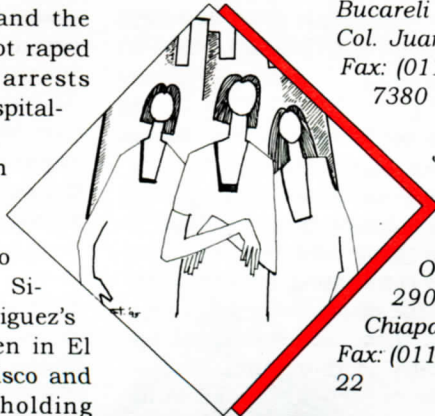
nurses who were part of a vaccination brigade were ambushed and raped by 25 heavily armed men as they were returning to San Cristobal. Rocks blocking the road forced the nurses to stop and get out of their vehicle to remove the barriers. They were ambushed by 25 heavily armed men who raped them. One woman suffered a broken pelvis and the lone woman who was not raped suffered nine cardiac arrests and continues to be hospitalized.

After the assault on her, Cecilia Rodriguez held a press conference in Mexico City to denounce the violence. Simultaneous with Rodriguez's press conference, women in El Paso, Texas, San Francisco and Chicago were also holding press conferences to denounce the violence.

But the media in Mexico and in the U.S. have not given it much coverage and even the *L.A. Times* which covered a press conference given by Rodriguez in Los Angeles decided not to print the story.

The Mexican government is not pursuing these cases actively and the media for the most part is silent on the violence that is being perpetuated against the women. The U.S. media who extensively covered Mexico's presumed economic growth prior to the economic bust is not printing the stories of the violence in Chiapas, and in particular the violence against women by the Mexican military.

Letters to Mexican officials to support the women and denounce these cases of violence against the women of Chiapas are being requested from readers. Send letters or faxes to:



C. Lic. Ernesto Zedillo
Presidente de Mexico
Residencia Oficial de Los Pinos
Puerta #1
Col. San Miguel Chapultepec
Mexico, D.F.
Fax:
(011-52-5) 271-1774 or 271-1764

C. Lic. Emilio Chauyffet
Secretario de Gobernacion
Bucareli #99
Col. Juarez, Mexico, D.F.
Fax: (011-52-5) 546-5350 or 546-7380

Julio Cesar Ferro
Gubernador Interino
de Chiapas
1a Avenida Norte
Oriente #456
29000 Tuxtla Gutierrez,
Chiapas
Fax: (011-52-967) 2-09-17 or 3-50-22

Ambassador
Embassy of the United States
Paseo de la Reforma #305
Col. Anzures C.P. 06550
Fax: (011-52-5) 208-3373

Fax copies of your letters to 011-52-967 so the women who have been raped will know that they are not lacking in support.

[Editor's Note: On February 1, 1996, Isis received a response from the Comision Nacional de Derechos Humanos (National Commission on Human Rights) to our letters of inquiry. The Commission reports that they have been made aware of Cecilia Rodriguez and are waiting for responses from officials investigating the rape in the state of Chiapas.]

HAIR-CUTTING ZEALOTS PREY ON MUSLIM GIRLS

by Allan Nawal

COTABATO CITY - Muslim women here oppose the recent

order of religious scholars, known as *ulama*, for them to wear veils as part of the Islamic tradition.

Since December, numerous complaints have been received by the media here on the *ulama's* alleged strict enforcement of the rule requiring the wearing of head cover called *hijab*.

Suspected religious fanatics, armed with scissors, have enforced the *hijab* rule and forcibly cut the hair of unveiled Muslim women.

Shameera, a university student, had her hair fixed at a beauty parlor and was walking with friends on Don Rufino Alonzo Street here when an unidentified man approached her and stepped on her toes.

The suspect, about 30 years old, immediately pulled out a pair of scissors and cut her hair so badly that she cried.

She said the suspect warned her to wear a *hijab* or her hair would be clipped again by force. Shameera now wears a *hijab*.

Maimona, another victim, said a man cut her hair while she was standing outside a department store here.

She now carries a knife to protect herself from the hair cutters.

"Just let them try that again," she said.

Ustadz Jaafar Ali, spokesman for the *ulama*, did not confirm or deny the hair cutting.

But he said that under Muslim laws, women are compelled to wear veils.

"It is in the Koran and the Hadith (saying of Prophet Mohammad, S.A.W). Women

should avoid exposing their hair because this could tempt the opposite sex," he said.

Source: Today
1 February 1996

INDONESIAN WOMEN ACTIVISTS: TARGETS OF RAPE AND TORTURE - AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

The human rights group Amnesty International said Indonesian women, particularly activists, were targets of arbitrary rape, torture, execution and other rights violations by security forces.

In a report entitled "Women in Indonesia and East Timor, Standing Against Repression," Amnesty International said torture has become institutionalized within the security forces."

Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman Ghaffar Fadyl said the report was "biased" and the allegations were not new. "Amnesty International has always been engaged in the distortion of facts on human rights in Indonesia," Fadyl said.

But Amnesty International spokeswoman Nalyni Mohamed said, in releasing the report, that "those who challenge Indonesian authorities frequently suffer human rights violations, including arbitrary arrest, rape, torture and extrajudicial executions," Mohamed said.

Amnesty International's report said women most at risk were those involved in land disputes, Islamic or other religious activities or those criticizing the central rule in the provinces of Aceh, Irian Jaya and East Timor. The report lists a number of allegations of imprisonment, rape, torture and executions of women in Indonesia in the 1990s.

Amnesty International said

it had received 40 testimonies from women describing torture since 1993. Torture methods included electric shock, cigarette burns, sleep and food deprivation, and bashing with iron bars, wood and bottles. "Torture is frequently used to obtain information, to intimidate detainees and to obtain confessions," Amnesty International said. "In many cases, the attitude of government and security officials appears to condone the human rights violations," it added.

The human rights group added that since the Indonesian invasion of East Timor in 1975, independence supporters had been routinely tortured and maltreated by Indonesian military personnel.

FILIPINO WOMEN TARGETED BY MOONIES

Philippine immigration authorities stopped 984 Filipinas from leaving Manila for South Korea as brides. The agency alleged that the women, who were married to mostly South Korean men in mass wedding rites of the Unification Church, are victims of a mail order bride scheme by the church.

Rodolfo Dumapias, an embassy counsellor in Seoul, said that, "To the Korean Unification men, marrying a Filipina or any foreign woman is like a business transaction [because] he pays more than \$2,000 to get a housemaid, who can also be a sex partner."

Reports have come to the Philippine embassy in Seoul that Filipina women were being brought to Seoul by the Unification Church and deployed as domestic workers and prostitutes. Reports also included the testimony of a

woman who was married to a member of the Unification Church. She said that her husband kept her at home as a prisoner and passed her around to other men.

The Unification Church, founded by Reverend Moon and whose members are called Moonies, has been a controversial religious sect in many countries. It is known internationally for its mass weddings. The mass weddings that were held in the Philippines have been found by authorities to be nothing more than "mass blessings" for the hundreds of couples that were matched by Reverend Moon in the Philippines.

Believers of the Unification Church claim that the church is a blend of many religions and that it is a peace-loving organization. They believe that their Church is being attacked for not being part of established religions.

Women who support the match-making of the Unification Church claim that they are under no coercion to leave their countries and to settle elsewhere. They added that the match-making process is with their participation.

Authorities counter that it is no coincidence that Filipinas are being targeted as brides. The Korean government has announced the need for 40,000 more workers to help small companies. Women also question why the Unification Church is targeting only Filipina women to become brides to mostly South Korean men. Why not Filipino men as grooms to foreign women?

Source: The Philippine Daily Inquirer and Today
25 January 1996

AFRICAN LEADER AWARDED

The 1995 Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable

