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**Saigon Denies Report
Of Torture in Prisons**

NY TIMES
SAIGON, Aug. 14 (Reuters)

—A South Vietnamese Government official today denied a report in The New York Times that political prisoners were being tortured in South Vietnamese jails.

"There is no such torture of prisoners," the Interior Ministry official said when questioned about the dispatch from Saigon published Sunday.

He said that under the country's state of martial law, people who had remained in areas temporarily captured by the Vietcong and North Vietnamese were questioned but then released.

He gave no details of the number of persons arrested since the start of the Communist offensive in March. Estimates have varied wildly. Opposition sources have put the figure at tens of thousands.

Extensive arrests are known to have been made by South Vietnamese police seeking to damage the Vietcong organization.

Police sources have said they were trying to root out the Vietcong middlemen who were guiding North Vietnamese troops into unfamiliar parts of South Vietnam, and were acting as their sources of supply and transport.