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MEDIA ADVISORY

MALI

Amnesty International's Secretary General meets President Alpha Oumar KONARÉ

Amnesty International's delegates currently visiting Mali-- Pierre Sané, Secretary General and Gaetan Mootoo, researcher -- will be holding a press conference at **9.00 am, Friday, 17 December 1999** at the Grand Hotel, Bamako.

The delegates will report on their meeting with President KONARÉ, and their recommendations to him, in his capacity as in-coming chair of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and in light of Mali's election to a non-permanent seat on the UN Security Council, to ensure that human rights protection is placed firmly at the forefront by West African governments.

Among its recommendations, Amnesty International urges the President:

ECOWAS Cease-fire Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) -- to ensure that ECOMOG forces deployed in trouble spots in the region adhere to international humanitarian and human rights law at all times;

Human rights defenders -- to recognize the serious situation faced by human rights defenders in the region as well as their important contribution to human rights protection, and to take steps to guarantee their freedom to carry out their work and to establish a human rights body within ECOWAS to monitor and address human rights violations;

Impunity -- to combat impunity by encouraging ECOWAS, the OAU and the UN Security Council to support impartial investigations into human rights violations to bring the perpetrators to justice, for example in Sierra Leone and Niger;

Small arms -- to halt the flow of specific transfers of small arms, light weapons and other security and policing equipment to those who may use them to commit gross human rights abuses;

Female genital mutilation -- to take the lead in ensuring that female genital mutilation is eradicated in Mali and other ECOWAS countries;

International Criminal Court -- to continue taking a lead role in promoting the establishment of the International Criminal Court and other measures to end impunity.

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