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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 03/92

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Israel and the Occupied Territories, Morocco and Tibet.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

Please note: The date for the news release on India is 25 March 1992, and not 27 March as we have said previously. Sorry about the mistake!

Sorry also for the delay with the Facts and Figures document (ORG 10/05/91/s) which you were sent, but which had a mistake. The correct figure for volunteer groups and one or two other numbers are still being checked - we hope to send you the correct version shortly. Thanks for your patience.

Cambodia - 24 January 1992

(New information)

A five-page document on the killings of demonstrators in Phnom Penh at the end of December has been prepared, based on first-hand information gathered during a recent mission to the country.

We would like to send this information to the media while it is still current and at a time when Cambodia is frequently in the news; therefore, we will be sending the document without a news release to the Bangkok and London news agencies at the end of this week.

The document is being sent to sections today; we expect the agency reports out of Bangkok will get good coverage and only ask you to deal with priority media at the national level.

The researcher and another delegate are available for interviews. Please contact the press office if you have journalists interested in doing interviews.

Cuba - possibly 30 January 1992

(New information)

Discussions are currently underway about possible publicity on escalating human rights violations in Cuba. For the time being, we suggest you refer

to the Urgent Actions issued in the past week and those to be issued in the future when dealing with media inquiries.

Women's Action - 5 February 1992

(New information)

An international news release and questions and answers on rape and sexual assault in custody to follow a Focus article in the International Newsletter. The news release is being sent to sections today (22 January 1992).

Philippines - 26 February 1992

An international news release and possible questions and answers to go with a document on extrajudicial executions. The campaign launch is tentatively planned for Manila.

India - 25 March 1992

An international news release for the campaign against rape, torture and deaths in custody. A major international launch is planned for London.

Weekly Update NWS 11/03/92

2. MDE 15/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL
22 January 1992

INTERNAL

This item was sent to specialist press and agencies by the IS, embargoed for today. Apologies for not letting you know beforehand, but the decision was taken very late.

EXTERNAL

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED ABOUT SECRET DETENTIONS IN ISRAEL

Amnesty International has called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to guarantee the safety of six Lebanese nationals who "disappeared" into secret detention in Israel in mid-1990 after they had been taken prisoner in Lebanon and reportedly tortured by the Lebanese Forces militia. They are now known to be held in Israel, although their whereabouts have not been disclosed.

"We have asked Prime Minister Shamir to provide the legal reasons why these men have been held in secret and to tell their relatives where they are and what their medical condition is", Amnesty International said. "We also want assurances that no other detainee is currently being held in secret in Israeli custody."

Two of the six detainees were taken prisoner by the Lebanese Forces on 16 November 1987 at a checkpoint on the outskirts of Beirut. The other four were seized on 18 December 1987 from the "Gardenia" ferry which was moored in Beirut harbour waiting to sail to Cyprus. A number of other people seized from the ship, including its captain, were later released.

According to Amnesty International's information, these detainees were held without any legal proceedings in the Lebanese Forces intelligence centre in Adonis in central Lebanon. They were accused of belonging to the Hizbullah Islamic organization and were allegedly tortured.

After several months family visits and correspondence were allowed through the good offices of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). However, the last contacts their families had with them were in April and May 1990. After that the Lebanese Forces said the six had been moved but would not say where. The families believed the six had been taken to Israel -- but until the beginning of this year the Israeli authorities consistently refused to acknowledge this.

Early in January the ICRC told the families that their relatives were in Israel, but that it had no access to them. The families believe that the six may be held either in Ashkelon or Sarafand prison.

The six, all Shia Muslims, are: Husayn Ahmad, a worker in a shoe factory aged 25; Husayn Rumayti, a worker in a glass shop aged 29; Ahmad Taleb, a sailor aged 25; Ahmad Jallul, another sailor aged 26; Ghassan al-

Dirani, a bank employee aged 26; and Husayn Tlays.

Amnesty International opposes the detention of prisoners of conscience -- people held solely for the non-violent exercise of their basic human rights -- in all circumstances. It opposes the detention of other political prisoners unless they have received a fair and prompt trial.

In its letter to Prime Minister Shamir, Amnesty International said it is concerned at the continued incommunicado detention of the six detainees. It called for their immediate and unconditional release unless they have been convicted of a recognizably criminal offence. Amnesty International asked for details of any charges or any trial proceedings. It also asked that they be allowed access to a humanitarian organization such as the ICRC.

In light of these cases, Amnesty International also said it was concerned that other people detained by the Lebanese Forces or other Lebanese militias may currently be secretly held in Israel.

3. MDE 29/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL
22 January 1992

MOROCCO: LONGEST-SERVING POCs RELEASED

Morocco's three longest-serving prisoners of conscience, Ahmed Aitbennacer, Ahmed Rakiz and Abdallah Harif, were released on 15 January 1992 from Kenitra Central Prison. They had been arrested in 1974 and 1975 and sentenced to between 30 years' and life imprisonment after an unfair trial of 178 left wing activists in 1977. They were the last three prisoners of this group to remain in Kenitra Prison after the release of 41 political prisoners in August and September 1991.

Ahmed Khiari, sentenced to death in 1972 for the murder of a police informer, had his sentence commuted to thirty years' imprisonment on 15 January 1991.

4. ASA 17/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
22 January 1992

INTERNAL

This item first appeared in the February 1992 edition of the International Newsletter. AI will be presenting a report on Tibet at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva shortly and it was felt this item might be useful for press officers in case of media queries. Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng will be visiting Switzerland at the time of the Commission and could take the opportunity to speak, in which case media interest would be particularly high.

AI's document, entitled People's Republic of China: Summary of AI's Concerns in Tibet (AI Index 17/71/91), was submitted in December 1991 to the UN Secretary-General. The UN Subcommission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities requested the Secretary-General in August 1990 to prepare a report on the human rights situation in Tibet for the Human Rights Commission, whose 48th meeting opens in Geneva on 27 January.

EXTERNAL

CHINA/TIBET: POCs STILL HELD AND DETAINEES STILL ILL-TREATED

Prisoners of conscience are being held throughout the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China, and ill-treatment of detainees continues to be reported, AI said in a 12-page document on Tibet made public in late January. Prisoners of conscience include people accused of expressing support for Tibetan independence or said to have been found in possession of clandestine documents. Ama Phurbu, a 60 years-old woman, is believed to be currently serving a 3-year term of "re-education through labour" in Gutsa, a detention centre in the Tibetan capital Lhasa. The Lhasa police reportedly found at her home leaflets advocating Tibetan independence from China and accused her of taking part in unauthorised demonstrations and public prayers. She has never been charged or tried.

AI has reported consistent and recurring allegations of torture in Tibet. Methods include beatings, shocks with electric batons and the use of handcuffs, shackles or ropes in positions deliberately intended to inflict pain.

Detainees, including teenage children, have reportedly been severely beaten in detention. One young Tibetan girl has been suffering from a lame leg and arm ever since she was badly beaten while detained for several months in 1990. A 24-year-old Buddhist nun detained in July 1990 reported that she was repeatedly submitted to electric shocks and beatings during interrogation sessions for most of her 10-month detention, incommunicado and without charge or trial.