
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 08/94

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - TURKEY, MEXICO
CORRECTION: SEE TURKEY ITEM NEWS SERVICE 07/94 - PARAGRAPH 12, THIRD SENTENCE, "There are serious fears for the life of Yavuz Binbay, former president of the Van branch of the HRA, who was taken from his shop by plainclothes police on 13 January, Van police headquarters has denied holding him" **THIS SENTENCE SHOULD BE DELETED FROM YOUR FINAL TEXT.**

PLEASE NOTE: SEE ENCLOSED FORM CONFIRMING AI PRESS OFFICERS MEETING

PLEASE NOTE: The embargo date for the UN Peacekeeping operations news release and document is no longer 4 February as originally stated, it has been changed to **26 January 1994**. As the document will not have gone in the weekly mailing by this time the IS will be sending it to sections individually, so please let us know if you would like a copy.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

UN Peacekeeping operations - 26 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170
Burundi - 27 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 05/94
UK - 9 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170
Kuwait - 24 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

USA death penalty - 14 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 03
Zaire - 2 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161
Saudi Arabia - 10 March more details to follow
Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56+57/93
South Africa - 23 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 05/94

POLITICAL KILLINGS AND "DISAPPEARANCES" CAMPAIGN - SECTION INITIATIVES
Israel Section: During the third week of January the section will be hosting an exhibition of their human rights poster collection, featuring both local cases and cases from the campaign, at Israel's national theatre.

AI PRESS OFFICERS MEETING

I would like to confirm that the AI Press Officers meeting to discuss media strategy for the campaigns on Colombia, Indonesia and Sudan will be held on 19, 20 & 21 February at the IS, plus a half-day on 22 February for Media/AV program discussion.

One day (Saturday, Sunday & Monday) will be spent on each campaign, including: short presentations on draft media strategies by the IS press office; short presentations on issues and action by researchers and campaign coordinators; and plenty of time for questions, brainstorming and contributions from section press officers.

The extra half-day on Tuesday 22 February will be spent discussing the new Media/AV program, for section press officers to feed into the current restructuring proposal.

We have had a great response from sections in W. Europe and N. America and look forward to seeing you all. Unfortunately, most sections in other regions are not able to afford to send their press officers to the meeting - particularly sad is that no sections in the regions on which the campaigns are being done are so far attending.

While some sections have been very generous in offering to pay for certain other section press officers, it was not clear in the initial response whether other sections attending the meeting would be able to contribute to a fare pool for smaller sections' press officers to attend. If your section can contribute in any way to such a pool, please contact me and I will organize the details. Also, contact me if you have any individual problems or requests concerning the meeting. Thanks and see you soon, Paula Seager (Tel: 413 5564, e-mail: pseager)

If you are coming to the meeting, please fill in the following form and return to the IS Press Office by Wednesday 26 January:

I will be attending the meeting on:
(please tick)

Saturday 19 February ___
Sunday 20 February ___
Monday 21 February ___
Tuesday 22 February half-day ___

I require the IS to book hotel rooms for the nights of (please note - sections are expected to pay for their accomodation):
(please tick)

Friday 18 February ___
Saturday 19 February ___
Sunday 20 February ___
Monday 21 February ___
Any more nights? please specify

Please note that coffee/tea/biscuits will be provided for morning/afternoon breaks and a buffet lunch will be provided on 19, 20 & 21 February.

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AI INDEX: EUR 44/WU 02/1994
14 January 1994

TURKEY: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES TURKISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION STATEMENT ON THE DEATH PENALTY

Amnesty International welcomes the statement issued by the Turkish Medical Association (TPA), announcing that the country's doctors will not participate in a possible forthcoming execution. If the execution takes place, it will be the first in Turkey for over nine years.

The TMA has consistently called for the abolition of the death penalty in Turkey, although this opposition has led to the prosecution of TMA leaders in the past.

The statement declares:

"It is unacceptable conduct for doctors, who are committed to the preservation of life, to examine a prisoner prior to execution or to aid in determining whether or not death has occurred. We demand changes in the laws which require the presence of a doctor during the execution of death sentences to bring the law into line with the directives of the World Medical Association and Turkish Medical Association (TMA) assemblies. We believe that an end must be put to the paradoxical situation whereby those whose duty it is to maintain life take part in the act of killing. We, the members of the Central Council of the TMA declare that, should we be required to participate in an execution, we will under no circumstances accept such a request."

On 17 December 1993 the parliamentary Judicial Commission approved the death sentence of Seyfettin Uzundiz, who was convicted in 1992 of murder and armed robbery. The sentence would have to be approved by an act of parliament before being carried out. It would be the first time in over nine years that Parliament would have been called on to ratify a death sentence. No date has been set for the case to go to Parliament and it is anticipated that as little as 24 hours notice may be given.

In a disturbing development, 17 members of the Turkish Parliament who belong to the Democracy Party (DEP) which is sympathetic to the cause of the Kurds in the southeast of Turkey, are having their parliamentary immunity questioned.

The Ankara State Prosecutor is seeking to have their immunity lifted so that, under current legislation, they can be tried on charges of separatism, which carries a mandatory death sentence on conviction.

Amnesty International opposes the use of the death penalty in all circumstances and welcomes the stand of the Turkish Medical Association.

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AI INDEX: AMR 41/ WU 02/1994
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MEXICO: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SENDS DELEGATION TO DOCUMENT REPORTS OF GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS FOLLOWING PEASANT AND INDIAN UPRISING

Amnesty International is sending a delegation to Mexico to carry out research into the many recent reports of gross human rights violations carried out by the Mexican security forces following an uprising on 1 January 1994 in the southern state of Chiapas by the armed opposition group Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, Zapatista National Liberation Army.

The Mexican Government repeatedly promised to respect human rights in the military operation to control the uprising but Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of gross violations during the operations including arbitrary arrests, torture of detainees, at least five cases of summary executions of prisoners and at least one "disappearance". The human rights organization has also received reports about bombing of the civilian population in several villages in the state of Chiapas. At crucial times the army restricted the access of independent human rights monitors and journalists to conflict areas such as the town of Ocosingo until the end of the second week of January, even though their visit could have helped prevent violations which took place after the army had taken control of the areas. Even the governmental National Human Rights Commission was restricted in access to areas controlled by the army.

On 12 January, two days after replacing Interior Minister Patrocinio González Garrido, a former governor of Chiapas, with Jorge Carpizo McGregor, President Carlos Salinas de Gortari announced a ceasefire and the government's willingness to establish a dialogue with the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional.

While welcoming the ceasefire, Amnesty International is calling for the Mexican Government to ensure effective prevention of further violations in Chiapas and elsewhere, and a full investigation into all the human rights violations reported in Chiapas. The organization is also calling for all those responsible to be brought to justice and be suspended from duty pending investigation. The organization is also calling for the government to guarantee and protect the work of human rights monitors in the region and to ensure the access of relatives and lawyers to prisoners.

Amnesty International's two person delegation - which includes a doctor with forensic skills - will visit Mexico during the third week of January and hopes to visit Chiapas, including the towns of Tuxtla Gutiérrez, San Cristóbal de las Casas, Ocosingo, Las Margaritas, Altamirano and Chanał. The aim of

the delegation is to analyze reports received by the organization; interview witnesses and relatives of victims; and to visit and examine prisoners.

Amnesty International has for many years documented a pattern of gross human rights violations against members of the indigenous and peasant communities over the issue of land-tenure conflicts in Chiapas and other regions in Mexico. A large number of the victims of such abuses belong to the poorest sectors of the population. The violations have included massive and arbitrary arrests, torture and ill-treatment of community members and sporadic cases of political killings. Those responsible have perpetrated the violations with impunity.

Amnesty International will continue to call for effective investigations into all cases of human rights violations, in Chiapas and elsewhere, that are reported to have taken place in the context of the present conflict, as well as for those responsible to be brought to justice.

Amnesty International, which also condemns the taking of hostages by armed opposition groups such as the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, has learned that most of those held by that group had been released by 14 January. While welcoming the release of prisoners, the organization remains concerned that Absalón Castellanos, a former governor to Chiapas, is still being held by the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, and calls for his immediate and unconditional release.

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