

nn

AI Index: NWS 11/28/93
Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 1279

Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street

London WC1X 8DJ

United Kingdom

TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 30 MARCH 1993

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 28/93

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Japan and an internal item of the UN World Conference on Human Rights.

NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Chad - 21 April

Please Note

The document to go with this campaign has been sent out to sections dated February. Please inform your section campaign coordinators and anyone else who may receive it that it is EMBARGOED FOR 21 APRIL.

Chad Campaign, document, news release, Q&A and ENR. The news release should be with you by 2 April, the Q&A shortly afterward.

Bangladesh - 28 April

Document on serious human rights violations in Bangladesh, accompanied either by a news release or an embargoed weekly update item.

Tadzhikistan - 5 May

Publication and news release on killings in the context of civil war - with striking similarities to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

US Juvenile Death Penalty - 26 March 1993

A weekly update item about executions of juveniles scheduled in both Texas and Missouri, was sent out in Weekly Update NWS 11/25/93. The IS will be sending it to media on Friday 26 March.

Baltic States Death Penalty Action - 1 April

Weekly update enclosed in WU NWS 11/20/93, embargoed for 1 April to coincide with the action launch. The IS press office is not proactively sending this out to media, though it will be used in response to media enquiries. It is mainly to assist sections who are planning media initiatives to go with the action.

Morocco - 14 April

Document and weekly update item - the IS will be sending this only to selected media (largely Arabic speaking).

China - 16 April

Document and embargoed weekly update item on torture, timed to coincide with China reporting to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT). China is scheduled to appear on 23 April - media are entitled to attend and we will be encouraging contacts to do so.

Brazil - 7 May

Please note new embargo date. Document on prison massacre, including new forensic information. Weekly update item to go with it. Sections are also being asked to carry out campaign work in connection with this document.

Unconfirmed news initiatives

News releases or embargoed weekly update items are being considered on the following subjects:

Malawi (May)

Indigenous people (to go with May Focus article)

Guatemala (May)

Egypt (late May)

World Conference (early June)

Nagorno-Karabakh (to go with possible action, May)

Aceh, Indonesia (July)

Section Initiatives

French Section - European Press Officers' Meeting

The second European Press Officers' meeting will take place in Paris this year. The date of this meeting is now fixed for 15 and 16 May as the majority of you asked for. It will be focused on two themes: Audiovisual work (production and TV experiences) and how to improve it; and the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

European World Conference Press Briefing in June

The British Section Press Office has been talking to the EC project office and the Francophone Belgium Press Officer about holding a European press briefing in Brussels for MEPs and for journalists who will be covering the World Conference. The date will probably be Tuesday, June 8th in the morning. The aim will be to look at the EC's role as a whole in terms of its internal shortcomings (Asylum issues, etc), external policies - aid/development, etc, and also to look at Europe's role within the UN.

Although the idea has been suggested by the British Section, it is hoped that all European Section Press Officers will be interested in being involved. For further information please contact either Daphne Davies, in the British Section Press Office or Johannes in the EC project office.

2. ASA 22/WU 02/93 EXTERNAL
30 March 1993

JAPAN: AMNESTY FEARS FURTHER EXECUTIONS

Amnesty International fears that further executions in Japan may be imminent, following the hanging last week of three men convicted of murder - the first executions to have been carried out there in over three years.

Over ninety prisoners are on death row, and Amnesty International is concerned that further executions may have been ordered. Japan's Justice Minister, Masaharu Gotoda, who was appointed last December, is reported to have ordered the executions and to have said the country is not ready to abolish the death penalty.

Amnesty International members and supporters throughout the world have sent urgent appeals to Minister Gotoda, expressing concern about the three reported executions, calling on the Japanese Government to suspend all executions and to stimulate public debate on the abolition of the death penalty.

The news of the three recent deaths has shocked the abolitionist movement in Japan, which is supported by politicians, lawyers, academics and a growing section of the general public. Abolitionists had hoped that the three year moratorium on executions meant the government was taking steps towards the abolition of the death penalty in Japan.

The last execution was carried out in November, 1989. Since then the abolitionist movement has gained strength and generated a lively public debate. A number of public figures have expressed support for abolition, including a former Minister of Justice and a former Supreme Court judge, Dr Dando Shigemitsu. He is reported to have said: "I am greatly shocked. It is regrettable that executions have resumed just at a time when the idea of abolishing capital punishment had finally begun to spread in Japan."

Abolitionist groups in Japan claim that the majority of the general public support abolition. They are urging the authorities to conduct a public opinion poll.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases, on the grounds that it constitutes the ultimate form of torture and inhuman treatment and that it is a violation of the right to life. The Japanese authorities have argued that the death penalty is necessary because it is favoured by the public and constitutes a deterrent against violent crime. However, research in the subject has failed to produce convincing evidence that the death penalty is an effective deterrent, in Japan or elsewhere.

Tachikawa Shujiro and Kawanaka Tetsuo were reported to have been executed at Osaka Detention House on 26 March, and Kondo Seikichi was reported to have been executed at Sendai Detention Centre on 25 March. However, the Ministry of Justice does not reveal the names of executed prisoners and it is impossible to obtain official confirmation.

Weekly Update 11/28/93

**3. IOR 41/WU 03/93 INTERNAL
30 March 1993**

UN WORLD CONFERENCE: PRESS OFFICE/TELEVISION CREW

During the conference calls with press officers on the World Conference, we asked press officers to let us know if they were interested in being part of the press team in Vienna. We would like to take decisions next week on the press team so if you are interested in being part of the team please let us know by 2 April.

We are looking for a range of language skills and knowledge of media from different regions of the world, so please indicate your experience in those areas. In total, we would like to have a six-person press team. As mentioned in the conference calls, we are asking press officers to pay for their travel and accommodation expenses.

To date we have had interest expressed by press officers in the UK, USA, Slovenia, Sweden, Denmark, and Belgium.

We had also mentioned that we are interested in having an AI television crew in Vienna, and again are looking for section interest in sponsoring such a project. Although the details have not been finalized, we are interested in being able to tape AI activities for use with journalists during the conference and for use in subsequent video work.

We have not had any response from sections on this proposal, and would appreciate any response by 5 April. Please contact Anita Tiessen, Acting Head of P&P.