

AI Index: NWS 11/35/92

Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 5300

Amnesty International

International Secretariat

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London WC1X 8DJ

United Kingdom

TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 3 SEPTEMBER 1992

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 35/92

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Jordan, Germany, Uganda, the conference on extrajudicial executions and "disappearances", Iraq and Burmese refugees in Bangladesh.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Uganda - 9 September

A report, news release, questions and answers and FOB (fold out brochure) to go with a campaign focusing on extrajudicial executions, detention and torture. They have all been sent to you.

Indigenous Peoples' Campaign - 7 October

Discussions are currently under way at the IS about the media strategy for the report. We are currently considering media materials, speakers, how to present the material, etc. As this is the first time we have done a report like this, we would like your input and think there should be an opportunity to discuss problems in advance.

Myanmar - 28 October

A document and news release on Myanmar, to go with an action to coincide with the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Turkey - 4 November

(New information)

A document and news release to go with a section level action about a wide range of human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

PLEASE NOTE: The document to go with the news release and action, Turkey: Walls of glass (AI Index: EUR 44/75/92), has been sent in this week's Weekly Mailing. Unfortunately it has been printed without an embargo - the document is nevertheless embargoed for 4 November and should not be used before then.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Children/AI week - 21 October

A targeted news release on children to go with a Focus article in October.

2. MDE 16/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL

2 September 1992

INTERNAL

This weekly update item has been sent by the IS to a small number of specialist media contacts.

EXTERNAL

JORDAN: ARRESTS OF TWO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

During the last week of August a number of people were arrested in Jordan, including Ya'qub Qarrash and Leith Shubeilat, two Islamic members of the Lower House of Parliament.

Amnesty International understands that the arrests were ordered by the prosecutor of the State Security Court and are related to accusations of membership of an illegal organization called al-shabab al-nafir al-islami, the Youth of the Islamic Call to Arms, and possession of weapons and explosives.

Mr Qarrash was arrested on 27 August, apparently with 10 others, five of whom were released the next day. He is now held in Jweidah Prison.

Amnesty International does not know the identity and whereabouts of the remaining five who are said to be still detained.

Mr Shubeilat was arrested on 31 August and is held in Swaqa Prison. According to reports, he is accused specifically of knowing about the organization and of lending his car to people who used it to transport weapons. His reaction to the accusations is not yet known.

Amnesty International has asked Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker on 2 September for details of the exact charges, if any have been brought against the detainees, and the current legal position of the detainees. It is concerned that if they are tried by the State Security Court their trial would be unfair, as no right of appeal to a higher tribunal is available against verdicts of this court.

In November 1991 the State Security Court convicted people on similar charges and passed death sentences against six detained defendants. King Hussein bin Talal later commuted these death sentences.

3. EUR 23/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL

3 September 1992

GERMANY: AI SEEKS INFORMATION REGARDING ROSTOCK RIOTS

Amnesty International wrote on Friday 28 August to the authorities in Mecklenburg-West Pomerania (Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) regarding the attacks that took place during the week on a hostel for asylum-seekers in Rostock-Lichtenhagen.

The organization had received reports that the police who had been defending the hostel withdrew their forces in the early hours of the morning of Tuesday, 25 August, the third night of the riots. During their approximately 90-minute absence, rioters set fire to the hostel and to neighbouring buildings, one of which housed over 100 Vietnamese asylum-seekers. Although approximately 200 asylum-seekers had been removed from the hostel, the Vietnamese refugees were still in a house next to the hostel at the time of the arson attacks and were in serious physical danger. In some reports of the incident it was alleged that police officers who were still within the vicinity of the hostel were aware of the situation and failed to act quickly.

Amnesty International has asked to be informed whether any investigation has been ordered into the allegations that have been made concerning the actions of the police on the night in question. The organization has urged that the results of any such investigation be made available to the public.

4. AFR 59/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL

3 September 1992

INTERNAL

The following weekly update provides the latest information about prisoner releases in Uganda, for press officers to use at the time of the campaign launch. The releases are referred to in general terms in the news release – the following is further information for interviews. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS INFORMATION IS ALSO EMBARGOED FOR 0001 GMT 9 SEPTEMBER 1992

Please bring this weekly update to the attention of the campaign coordinator.

EXTERNAL

EMBARGOED FOR 0001 GMT 9 SEPTEMBER 1992

UGANDA: AI WELCOMES PRISONER RELEASES

On 14 August 1992 the Ugandan government announced the pardon and release of 1,369 prisoners who in 1991 had been accused of desertion from the government's National Resistance Army (NRA) and convicted in unfair military trials.

The majority of prisoners were from northern Uganda and had been arrested in mass round-ups during counter-insurgency operations. The prisoners, who were held in civil prisons, reportedly included men who had not been members of the NRA.

Amnesty International had expressed concern that their trials amounted to little more than administrative hearings and did not allow the right of appeal. The organization was concerned that their convictions appeared to represent an attempt by the authorities to perpetuate detention without charge or trial by convicting prisoners under a process that outwardly conformed to the due process of law but in reality fell far short of international standards of fair trial. A committee was reportedly set up to review these cases in late 1991.

The pardons follow the release on 7 August 1992 of 133 prisoners detained without charge or trial and held in civil prisons. The majority of these detainees, who were from parts of northern and eastern Uganda that have been affected by armed conflict, had been held for several years, some since 1986.

These releases are welcome as they represent a significant reduction in the total number of political prisoners held in Uganda. Amnesty International remains concerned, however, that unlawful detention without charge or trial continues to be frequent in Uganda. The organization is concerned about prisoners held without charge or trial in military barracks both in the capital, Kampala, and other parts of the country. Amnesty International is urging the Ugandan government to put an end to detentions outside the framework of the law, particularly incommunicado detention without charge or trial in military barracks. The organization is also urging the government to ensure that when military trials take place they fully conform to international standards for fair trial.

5. ACT 33/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL

3 September 1992

INTERNAL

The international conference on extrajudicial executions and "disappearances", "Elimination and Terror", is being held this weekend, 4-6 September, in Amsterdam. All sections should have a copy of the brochure for the conference which outlines the purpose and the key issues that will be discussed. If you don't have a copy, you can contact the IS press office.

The conference is not open to the media, but arrangements for individual interviews are being made by the section press officer, Maud Bredero. A press release announcing the conference has been sent to Dutch media and foreign correspondents in Amsterdam and a press conference is also planned for the final day of the conference. If you receive any calls from your media or would like correspondents from your national media to be contacted, please contact Maud at 31 20 626 44 36.

The following is a translation of the text of the Dutch Section news release.

EXTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EXTRAJUDICIAL EXECUTIONS AND "DISAPPEARANCES"

The Dutch Section of Amnesty International is hosting an international conference in Noordwijkerhout from 4-6 September on extrajudicial executions and "disappearances", entitled "Elimination and Terror".

For more than 30 years, people have been killed by their own governments and in more than 25 countries people have "disappeared" at the hands of the authorities. These countries deny their responsibility and try to justify "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions by talking about states of emergency or violence by opposition groups.

Although in recent years we have seen positive developments, including within the United Nations, most extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" remain unclarified and the perpetrators are not brought to justice.

Amnesty International has invited 140 people from more than 50 countries to share their experiences in the fight against extrajudicial executions and "disappearances". The conference will lead to an action programme for the future, to end these terrible human rights violations committed by both governments and armed opposition groups.

The participants are from international organizations, including representatives of human rights groups from many countries and other experts. They will consider issues such as:

- the role of the United Nations
- possibilities for governments to have influence in their bilateral dealings
- bringing the perpetrators to justice
- the use of forensic research
- publicising extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

6. MDE 14/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL

3 September 1992

INTERNAL

The following weekly update summarizes our latest concerns in southern Iraq and our position on international involvement for sections to use in response to media inquiries. Because of the escalation of international involvement in the situation in southern Iraq in recent days we are concerned that Amnesty International is not perceived to be in any way encouraging military involvement. We would therefore ask sections to use their discretion in releasing this information and to check with the IS Press Office before making any high profile media statements.

The IS is also considering writing an opinion piece. This will be sent to you if we go ahead with it.

EXTERNAL

IRAQ: SUMMARY OF CONCERNS

Introduction

Amnesty International remains gravely concerned about the critical human rights situation in Iraq, and believes that the United Nations (UN) should urgently resume discussion of how to implement monitoring of the human rights situation throughout the country. Irrespective of the military steps which have been taken recently by a number of governments with the stated aim of offering the local population of southern Iraq some immediate protection, Amnesty International believes that the human rights crisis in Iraq needs to be addressed by multilateral action through the UN. The UN's Special Rapporteur on Iraq, appointed by the Commission on Human Rights in 1991, has proposed establishing an on-site human rights monitoring operation in Iraq. To date the UN has failed, through any of its bodies, to take action on this proposal.

Amnesty International's concerns

Scores of unarmed civilians are reported to have been killed in recent weeks in the al-Ahwar (marshes) region of southern Iraq as a result of repeated military attacks on the area by the Iraqi armed forces. Amnesty International fears that many of these were deliberate and arbitrary killings perpetrated outside the immediate context of conflict with armed combatants. The extent and persistence of the bombardment of civilian targets over the past two months in particular, and the lack of any attempt by the authorities to detain rather than kill alleged suspects and to provide for due process of law, heightens Amnesty International's fears not only that the Iraqi government may have failed to discriminate between unarmed civilians and combatants, but that it has apparently adopted a policy of deliberately targeting non-combatant civilians.

Amnesty International does not take a position on the current armed conflict between Iraqi government forces and their opponents in southern Iraq. Amnesty International does not identify itself with any of the parties to a particular conflict, nor does it presume to judge in any situation whether recourse to violence is justified or not. In a situation of armed conflict, Amnesty International restricts itself to working for the protection of the human rights that fall within its mandate and does not comment or act on issues that fall outside those terms of reference. In this case, Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the Iraqi government appears to be targeting manifestly non-combatant groups of people for reasons unrelated to any acts of violence. In addition to attempts by the government to force its opponents in the marshes out of hiding, Amnesty International fears that the current military campaign may also be intended as a punitive measure against the civilian population of the marshes, for their failure to comply with government directives to evacuate the area, for their imputed political sympathies, and for the acts of some who are harbouring and assisting government opponents taking refuge there.

Amnesty International believes that its present fears are further justified by the Iraqi government's past human rights record in general and its repressive policies towards its Kurdish population in particular. Recent events in the southern marshes bear a strong resemblance to those that have taken place in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq in recent years. There, the government carried out a series of similar operations, targeting civilian areas as a punitive measure against the population for their imputed political sympathies and because some had harboured and assisted armed Kurdish fighters. Tens of thousands of civilians were forcibly evacuated from their homes which were then razed to the ground. Their villages and towns were declared to be "prohibited for reasons of security" and orders were given to execute anyone deemed to have defied them. Amnesty International has documented cases of this kind in its past reports on human rights violations in Iraq. It has also documented thousands of cases of the "disappearance" of civilians who were forced to leave their homes on the pretext of relocation to purpose-built resettlement camps said by the government to offer better living conditions. Thousands of others "disappeared" after reaching the resettlement camps: some are known subsequently to have been executed. These and other policies used against the Kurds, including the chemical weapon attacks on unarmed civilians, led Amnesty International to conclude that the Iraqi government was pursuing a policy of deliberate elimination of large numbers of civilians. At the height of the repression against the Kurds between 1987 and 1989, the official responsible for implementing these policies was 'Ali Hassan al-Majid, who was later appointed governor of Kuwait during its seven-month occupation. He currently holds the post of Minister of Defence with responsibility for military operations in southern Iraq.

Gross violations of human rights are also continuing in other parts of Iraq, exemplified by the recent summary execution in Baghdad of some 40 merchants and businessmen accused of profiteering, some of whom were reportedly tortured while in custody. Hundreds of others have also been arrested in a crackdown on Iraqis accused of fixing the prices of goods at levels different to those specified by the state, and whose fate and whereabouts remain unknown. The fate of over 200,000 people who "disappeared" in recent years, and the hundreds who "disappeared" after the March 1991 uprising, remains unknown. Thousands of victims of arbitrary arrest and torture, many of whom have been held without trial for over a decade, remain in detention. (See [Iraq: Human rights violations since the uprising](#), July 1991, AI Index: MDE 14/05/91)

Developments in southern Iraq since the 1991 uprising:

Since the crushing of the Kurdish and Arab Shi'a uprisings in April 1991, the Iraqi government has continued to perpetrate widespread human rights violations. With respect to the largely Arab Shi'a population of southern Iraq, these violations have included arbitrary arrests, detention without trial, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions. At the same time, a series of articles published in government newspapers in the aftermath of the uprising criticised the Shi'a faith and questioned its validity. The Shi'a population of the marshes came in for particular condemnation, with one newspaper article describing them as "un-Iraqi" and an inferior people. On the military level, Amnesty International has received details of persistent attacks on villages in the marshes of al-'Amara, Basra and al-Nasiriyya provinces since July 1991. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Iraq, Max van der Stoep, stated the following in the interim report on the human rights situation in the country which he presented to the Security Council on 11 August 1992:

"... the Special Rapporteur is especially cognizant of a video-tape in his possession wherein the present Prime Minister [of Iraq] is heard to instruct late in 1991 several Iraqi army generals to "wipe out" three specific Marsh Arab tribes. The same video-tape ... shows Iraqi army personnel apparently training to carry out assaults on the population, with some portions of the video-tape appearing to show actual interrogations and raids in progress."

A copy of this video-tape is also in Amnesty International's possession.

In April 1992, Iraq's National Assembly approved a decree authorizing the creation of resettlement camps outside the marshes region, and orders were issued to the local inhabitants to evacuate their villages. The rationale behind these moves, according to government statements,

was to offer the local population improved living conditions. Since April, military attacks by the armed forces on the marshes region have intensified, with the increased use of heavy artillery and helicopter gunships. Some of these attacks were reportedly made on clearly civilian targets. In one incident on 20 May 1992, for example, 13 civilians were reported to have been killed as a result of helicopter gunship attacks on a wedding ceremony in the village of al-Agir in al-'Amara province. Amnesty International has received the names of the victims, who include men, women and children.

Since mid-July, the situation is reported to have deteriorated further. Heavy military bombardment is reportedly concentrated in the al-'Amara marshes and eastward towards the Iran-Iraq border. Amnesty International is deeply concerned that many of the unarmed civilians who were victims of such attacks were killed or injured outside the immediate context of armed conflict. Moreover, the Iraqi authorities have not acknowledged taking any prisoners. On 7 July, several brigades of the Iraqi army launched an offensive on the villages of al-Wadiya, Umm al-Hosh, al-Muzar and al-Hajiya. A tank battalion of the Republican Guards was said to have participated in the attacks, in which helicopter gunships and fighter planes were also reportedly used. Further attacks took place on the villages of Shumbara and al-'Uwaili on 9 July, and on the villages of Abu Sabbur, al-Muzar and Umm al-Hosh on 10 July. On 21 July, the armed forces renewed their bombardment and artillery shelling of some of these villages and other areas, including al-Agar, al-Saigal, al-Duwara, al-Mufsil and al-Sihin. The military attacks were said to have lasted several hours, continuing on 22 July when other areas also came under attack, including al-Cheddi and al-Tar. Similar attacks have continued during August. On 2 August, the village of al-Bahra in al-'Amara province was shelled with heavy artillery, as were the regions of Abu Sabbur, al-Naggara and al-Wadiya on 17 August.

Amnesty International is currently investigating reports it has received of the use of napalm by the Iraqi armed forces on the local population of the marshes in recent weeks outside the immediate context of armed conflict. It has received details of one incident said to have taken place on 16 July in the village of al-Agar in the al-'Amara marshes. According to information received, Iraqi army helicopters circled the village and gave orders for immediate evacuation. The villagers were reportedly not given adequate time to comply with these orders before military attacks began, and which were said to include the dropping of napalm containers onto the reed dwellings in the village. Several unarmed civilians are said to have been killed as a result. Amnesty International has received the names of three of them, all males aged between 19 and 75.

The marshes region

The al-Ahwar (marshes) region is located between the southern Iraqi cities of al-'Amara, al-Nasiriyya and Basra, traditionally home to several hundred thousand Arabs. Due to the nature of the terrain and the consequent difficulties of access, the marshes have also served as an area of refuge for government opponents and army deserters alike. In recent years the government made a number of unsuccessful attempts to drain the marshes in order to facilitate its military and security operations there. Following the crushing of the March 1991 uprising, thousands more Iraqis fleeing from the advancing Iraqi army went into hiding in the marshes, together with their families. The government's attempts to force them out intensified earlier this year, while at the same time it denied all United Nations (UN) personnel and international humanitarian agencies access to the area for the distribution of food and other relief aid to the civilian population. In April, the government ordered the evacuation of the marshes region, and the current military offensives are said to be in part a retaliatory measure for non-compliance with these orders. In recent months, a number of steps have been taken to increase the pressure on the local inhabitants, principally by further isolating the area and cutting off food supplies. Dry agricultural lands bordering the marshes have been expropriated, crops have been burned and homes have been destroyed. Measures have also been taken to block the tributaries of rivers flowing through the marshes and to redirect the flow of water. These are said to include the tributaries of al-Majar, Nahiyat al-Salam, al-Shadhrit, Abu 'Ushra and al-Wadiya. Living conditions for the local inhabitants are said to be dire.

The need for human rights monitoring in Iraq

Amnesty International takes no position for or against military action in any situation. Amnesty International's role is to research and make public its concerns about the human rights situation in any country; the stating of these concerns does not in any way imply advocacy of or support for military action. The organisation's concern is for the protection of fundamental human rights, which often are subjected to

widespread abuse in the context of internal or international armed conflict.

Amnesty International does believe that the international community has a responsibility to seek to prevent human rights violations in all parts of Iraq. Jan Eliasson, the UN's Emergency Relief Coordinator, recently went to Baghdad to press for the renewal of the Memorandum of Understanding agreed last year between the Iraqi Government and the UN, which expired at the end of June. This agreement, originally signed in April 1991 and renewed last November, provided for a UN humanitarian assistance and relief program and the setting up of UN sub-offices and Humanitarian Centres in Iraq wherever a humanitarian presence might be needed. In addition, a contingent of UN guards were deployed in Iraq to protect UN personnel and operations linked with the humanitarian program. Amnesty International considers that this agreement should be renewed without delay. However, although it appears that the UN humanitarian presence, including the guards contingent, may have served as some measure of protection for sectors of the civilian population against human rights violations, it is not by itself sufficient to address the critical human rights situation in the country. In particular, a humanitarian presence was never fully established in the south of the country owing to the lack of cooperation by the Iraqi authorities. If the Memorandum of Understanding is renewed, it is imperative that it be fully respected by the Iraqi Government and the UN be permitted to establish a humanitarian presence wherever it is needed in any part of the country.

Amnesty International still considers that further steps are needed to address the human rights situation in Iraq. In July 1991 the organisation called for the establishment by the United Nations of an on-site human rights monitoring operation in Iraq. It welcomes the fact that the Special Rapporteur on Iraq in his report to the UN Commission on Human Rights in February 1991 strongly urged such an exceptional response by the UN to the human rights situation in Iraq, and that he has subsequently developed his own proposal for on-site monitoring in considerable detail as the Commission requested him to do. His proposal includes the sending of a number of mobile teams of human rights monitors to Iraq to establish local offices and a public presence. The teams, which would be the intermediaries of the Special Rapporteur and would report to him, would monitor events in the surrounding region, receive information relating to allegations of human rights violations and investigate these. They could also make representations to the local authorities on urgent matters on behalf of the Special Rapporteur. Amnesty International regrets that neither the UN Commission on Human Rights nor the Security Council have adopted this proposal and has pressed Iraq to accept such monitoring.

The fact that gross human rights violations are continuing in Iraq, some of which are again attracting international attention, further underlines the need for an on-going monitoring presence in all parts of the country. Amnesty International hopes that the Special Rapporteur's proposal will be urgently considered by the UN and that steps can be taken to implement an operation of this nature. The organization recognizes, as the Special Rapporteur himself has pointed out, that on-site monitoring could only be established with the cooperation of the Iraqi Government in a way that enables the monitors to operate effectively. What is required now is for the UN to press the Government of Iraq for such cooperation with the support of all member governments, including those not currently involved in the implementation of the "no-fly zone". The Government of Iraq took a number of foreign journalists to one location in the marshes on 23 August, and Iraq's representative to the UN has now suggested a visit to the country by a committee of 'wise men' drawn from a list of countries acceptable to Iraq. This committee would investigate human rights abuses in order to establish 'the truth as Iraq has been saying it'. Amnesty International believes that the Government of Iraq should indeed permit human rights investigation, and should do so by giving full access to the Special Rapporteur and accepting implementation of his proposal for establishing on-site monitoring.

7. ASA 16/WU 04/92 EXTERNAL

3 September 1992

INTERNAL

If possible, we would like to get some publicity about this issue, although it would obviously only be of interest to specialist media. Please also draw it to the attention of your refugee co-ordinators. Thank you.

EXTERNAL

MYANMAR/BANGLADESH: AI CALLS FOR HELP FOR BURMESE MUSLIM REFUGEES

Amnesty International continues to be concerned about the situation of around a quarter of a million Burmese Muslim refugees who have fled to Bangladesh. It is calling on the international community to take action to ensure their protection.

Over 260,000 Burmese Muslims, often known as Rohingyas, have fled to Bangladesh from Rakhine (Arakan) State in Myanmar (Burma) since early 1991. Amnesty International has gathered first-hand testimony from victims and eye-witnesses which shows that Muslims living in Rakhine State have suffered extensive and gross violations of their human rights.

The Myanmar armed forces have forcibly evicted Muslims from their homes (which in many cases they then destroyed), arbitrarily detained many of them and, in some cases, tortured and extrajudicially executed them. In other cases, Muslims have been tortured and ill-treated while serving as forcibly conscripted porters or labourers on construction sites for the military. In one recent case, a 60-year-old man from a village near Maungdaw town died in custody, apparently as a result of beatings by soldiers, in June 1992.

If the refugees are to be able to return safely from Bangladesh to Myanmar, the international community must press the government of Myanmar to accept effective international monitoring of their voluntary repatriation. This must include monitoring their situation after their return, to ensure that they do not risk falling victim to further human rights violations at the hands of the Myanmar security forces. Until the refugees can safely return from Bangladesh, the international community must provide the government there with assistance to enable it to carry out its own obligation to protect the refugees.

A bilateral agreement of 28 April 1992 between the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh provided for the "safe and voluntary" return of the refugees; the two governments also agreed that the services of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) could be drawn upon as needed at an appropriate time. However, when some days later the two governments signed a technical agreement on implementation of the repatriation, they did not provide a mechanism to ensure that the return would be safe and voluntary, nor had either of them consulted UNHCR about the implementation plan or UNHCR's own role in it.

The planned repatriation of the refugees has been postponed in the face of protests from the refugees, who are not willing to return to Myanmar unless the UNHCR is fully involved in the repatriation process. A press briefing issued by the Bangladesh authorities stated that the two governments agreed on 23 July 1992 that "consular personnel and designated officers of Bangladesh" would regularly visit repatriation centres and Muslim villages in Myanmar after the refugees return there. Amnesty International does not believe this is enough to ensure effective monitoring of repatriated refugees.

The government of Bangladesh has pledged that there will be no forced return of refugees to Myanmar, and the government of Myanmar has agreed to take measures to halt the exodus of Burmese Muslims to Bangladesh and encourage those who have already left to return voluntarily and safely. However, there is no evidence to indicate that the human rights situation in Rakhine State has improved.

In a letter sent on 3 August to over 20 governments worldwide, Amnesty International stated that it will not be safe to repatriate the refugees, as envisaged in the agreement between the governments of Myanmar and Bangladesh, unless provision is made for effective international monitoring of their situation after return to Myanmar.

The organization believes that if the refugees are to make genuinely voluntary decisions regarding their return, such international monitors must be truly independent and be seen as such by all the parties involved, especially the refugees themselves. International standards explicitly recognize the UNHCR as an appropriate body to undertake monitoring of the situation of returned refugees in their country of origin. Accordingly, Amnesty International is calling on the international community to make all possible efforts to press the Myanmar government to accept UNHCR monitoring of the process of the refugees' voluntary repatriation, including their situation after return to Rakhine State.

Until an effective international monitoring system is in place and the refugees can safely return, the government of Bangladesh is responsible for providing effective and durable protection to the quarter of a million Burmese Muslims who have sought refuge there. But it cannot be expected to provide effective protection for so many refugees without substantial support from the international community.

International standards recognize that the obligation of protecting refugees may present governments with serious practical difficulties, particularly where there is a large-scale influx of refugees; these international standards provide that in such situations the international community must assist.

Amnesty International is therefore calling on governments around the world to give the government of Bangladesh assistance to enable it to provide protection to the Burmese Muslim refugees until they can safely return to Myanmar. The organization welcomes the emergency aid which several states have granted to date to assist the Bangladesh government, and asks that the international community continue to provide such assistance for as long as the refugees need to remain in Bangladesh.

No. of words: 1483

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 7 SEPTEMBER 1992

ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 35/92

Contained in this addition to the weekly update is an external item on Bosnia-Herzegovina

Weekly Update NWS 11/35/92 add

1. EUR 63/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL
7 September 1992

INTERNAL

The following weekly update is a brief summary of the findings of the AI fact-finding team that returned recently from the former Yugoslavia. The update does not contain information on any violations that have taken place since the holding of the London Conference.

During the next two weeks, we will be issuing a first report on our concerns and the human rights issues that need to be addressed during the peace process. There will be an international news release with the report. Because there will be an international release of this report shortly, we would ask press officers to consult with the IS press office before undertaking any high profile release of this weekly update.

Sections will also be receiving recommendations for action on our concerns. Further short reports are also planned to provide sections with information on a regular basis.

EXTERNAL

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: INVESTIGATION TEAM FINDS EXTENSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Amnesty International's fact-finding team has recently returned from the former Yugoslavia and Hungary with evidence of arbitrary arrests, detentions, and extrajudicial executions in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Although it was difficult to sift fact from rumour during such a conflict, the team was able to confirm certain abuses, mainly through interviews with refugees and ex-detainees in Serbia, Croatia, and Hungary.

Because of the ongoing conflict, many of the people who were interviewed wanted to have the names or details of the incidents they witnessed or were involved in withheld in order to protect themselves or their relatives still in Bosnia from further risk.

The following is a summary of Amnesty International's current concerns together with brief details of some incidents. In most cases Amnesty International is seeking more information about the incidents, but believes that there is enough evidence to report them at this stage.

Arbitrary arrest, detention, exchanges of non-combatants, and ill-treatment

Amnesty International has interviewed scores of ex-detainees who had been held by Serbian forces in large-scale detention centres, such as a football stadium in Bosanski Novi, a nearby factory called Keraterm, Modri__a, Omarska, Manja__a and Trnopolje.

Others interviewed had been held in smaller locations like police stations, private houses and the basements of hotels and apartment blocks. Detention in these smaller locations appears usually to have been transitory as people were held for interrogation, waiting to be transferred to other places of detention, or pending release or "exchange".

There is evidence which suggests that some people were arrested to be used in hostage exchanges with people held by the other side. In one case a Muslim held in a house in a village by Serbian soldiers pending "exchange" was put on the telephone to his brother in Croatia, who was trying to arrange the "exchange", in order to confirm that the Muslim hostage was alive and in captivity.

Although their detention conditions varied greatly, most ex-detainees complained of poor food and sanitation, and ill-treatment, in particular beatings, appears to be widespread. Former detainees from the Manja__a camp stated that beatings stopped for the duration of visits by the ICRC (International Committee of the Red Cross), but that immediately after the departure of the first ICRC delegation, all detainees were systematically beaten.

A number of the refugees interviewed said they had to sign documents giving up their property rights before they were released from detention or allowed to leave a particular area.

Amnesty International has also interviewed detainees held by TO (Territorial Defence) forces controlled by the Bosnian presidency who alleged that ill-treatment and extrajudicial executions had taken place. Amnesty International is seeking further information about detention centres under the control of the TO.

Reports suggest that arbitrary arrests and detentions are being carried out by all sides in the conflict, although there is a difference in the scale of detentions. Although no one can reliably estimate the number of people held by each side, AI believes the number of prisoners visited and registered by the ICRC gives some indication, although the ICRC has not yet had access to all detainees in Bosnia-Herzegovina. From early July to late August, the ICRC had registered 9848 prisoners held by the Serbian forces, 954 held by Croatian forces in Bosnia-Herzegovina and 902 by forces controlled by the Bosnian presidency forces.

Extrajudicial executions

Amnesty International has received allegations of mass-killings of civilians in Bosnia-Herzegovina; although it is difficult to confirm all of these reports Amnesty International does believe that many of the allegations are true.

Most of the evidence suggests that many Muslims and Croats have been extrajudicially executed by Serbian forces in the course of searching or clearing towns or villages with the apparent aim of detaining the remaining non-Serb population or causing them to flee.

Amnesty International is also investigating the killings reported in Mostar which apparently occurred during the Serbian retreat from the town. There are allegations that some of the victims had been held in detention by Serbian forces before being killed, although no evidence has yet emerged to confirm this claim.

The organization does not believe that there is enough evidence yet to back up claims that large-scale, systematic executions inside detention camps have taken place in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The testimony gathered so far indicates that many people have died from beatings in the detention centres but that it is difficult to determine whether there was a definite intention to cause death in all of the cases. There are allegations of a number of incidents where detainees have been shot in ones or twos.

In one incident reported by a witness who had been held in the Manja__a camp a man believed to be from Klju__ was killed by Serbian soldiers. In mid-July, the victim was apparently ordered to dig a hole in front of the cattle shed where he slept, after which four uniformed soldiers then came into the shed, ordered the victim to lie on his back, and jumped on him with heavy army boots and beat him with electrical cables for about 20 minutes. With the victim bleeding from the mouth and ears, one of the soldiers then pulled out a large knife and cut his stomach open with a vertical slit and pulled out some of his internal organs. Four prisoners were then ordered to remove the body to the hole the victim had previously dug and to fill in the grave.

Reports of extrajudicial executions which occurred as people were arrested or moved out of their towns are frequent. In one incident, at least six unarmed men were reportedly shot in the village of Blagaj near Bosanski Novi in early June. A group of about 15 Serbian soldiers had ordered the men to lie face down in the main road. Three soldiers then ordered three of them to stand up. They were shot as they were moved at

gunpoint along another street where women and children from the village had been assembled. Two other men had reportedly been shot in the main street earlier and their bodies were lying there covered. A sixth man was shot later as the villagers were being held in the yard of a factory in the village before being put onto a railway train. After addressing one of the Serbian soldiers whom he recognized, he was hit on the forehead with the barrel of a semi-automatic weapon, kicked in the back and then shot with one or two bullets.

Another witness from the town of Zvornik alleged that in early April 1992, she, her family and neighbours were rounded up by Serbian soldiers who identified themselves as "Arkan's men" (members of a paramilitary group commanded by __eljko Ra__natovi__ who is known more commonly under the *nom de guerre* Arkan). It is not clear whether they really were from his group or were just using the name to instill fear.

In describing the killing of the six men among them she said:

"They took us all out into my orchard ... and made all of us lie face down, there were fifteen of us, women and children and the six of them [the men]. They strangled my oldest son with wire, I saw it all. Afterwards they got us all up from there, one man remained to kill us and somehow one girl begged him, 'if you have', she said, 'a mother, if you have a sister', she said, 'at least do not kill us.'"

Amnesty International is continuing to gather information relating to other concerns in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular reports of rape in the Serb-run Trnopolje camp and other locations.