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Amnesty International  
International Secretariat  
1 Easton Street

London WC1X 8DJ

United Kingdom

**TO: PRESS OFFICERS**

**FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS**

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**WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 48/93**

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Canada and Spain.

**NEWS INITIATIVES**

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES**

**Guatemala - 18 May**

Document with a news release on a full range of recent human rights violations (in the past year or so) in Guatemala.

**Egypt - 26 May**

Document and news release on all our concerns in Egypt. These include very high numbers of prisoners and torture.

**UN World Conference - 2 June**

News release on UN World Conference to go with June Focus article and ENR.

**UN WORLD CONFERENCE-RELATED NEWS INITIATIVES ONLY THROUGHOUT JUNE**

**Annual Report - 8 July**

Annual Report publication, Worldwide Summary, Regional Summaries, Regional Updates, news release.

**Indonesia (Aceh) - 28 July**

Document and news release to go with action on massive numbers of political killings.

## **TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES**

### **Malawi - 18 May**

Please note the embargo date has been changed back to 18 May.

Document on human rights violations and the referendum will be sent to international media by the IS Press Office.

### **Azerbaijan - 28 May**

Document on hostage-taking and weekly update item to go with section-level action. IS Press Office will send out to selected international media.

### **World Conference: Video Material**

A video setting out our agenda for the World Conference is currently in production. It will be a development from the conventional ENR format and will be available in four languages. It will be distributed to sections and embargoed for 2 June.

Video compilation tapes are also in preparation for use at the time of the World Conference. One will include footage of human rights violations to illustrate the challenge to governments; another will focus on AI's own work. These tapes will be edited on 4 June and will be embargoed for 14 June.

### **Section Initiatives**

#### **European World Conference Press Briefing in June - Please check with British Section for date**

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 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.

#### **"Caravan of Conscience" - 16 to 25 May**

The Irish Section's convoy of buses through Europe to the borders of Serbia and Croatia left Ireland on Sunday. You were sent a weekly update item on Friday 14 May - please contact the Irish Section for further information.

**2. AMR 20/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL  
18 May 1993**

**CANADA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WRITES TO CANADIAN AUTHORITIES ABOUT DEATHS IN SOMALIA**

**Amnesty International wrote to the Ministers of Defence and Justice of Canada on 13 May, expressing concern about reports of the death of a Somali man while in the custody of Canadian members of the UNITAF international force in Somalia - apparently as a result of ill-treatment. The organization also expressed concern about the killing of another Somali man in circumstances suggesting excessive use of force.**

**On 16 March a man was arrested when allegedly attempting to get into the Canadian compound and held there. He was found dead some hours later, reportedly beaten to death. On 4 March two men were shot at by Canadian soldiers and one of them was killed. They were reportedly running away from the soldiers and did not present a danger to them.**

**Amnesty International understands that an investigation has been initiated by the relevant authorities and urged that any investigation into these deaths should be held in public and by independent investigators.**

2. EUR 41/WU 02/93 EXTERNAL  
18 May 1993

**SPAIN: UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE AGAINST TORTURE CRITICIZES SPANISH GOVERNMENT'S REPORT**

On 23 April 1993 the United Nations (UN) Committee Against Torture examined Spain's supplementary report giving information on new measures and developments on the implementation of the UN Convention.

Information had been given to the Committee by several Spanish Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the Parliamentary Commissioner. Amnesty International offered its paper, published in March 1993 in English, French and Spanish, Spain: Torture and Ill-treatment: Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns (AI Index: EUR 41/01/93).

The Amnesty International paper contained an explanation of arrest and detention procedures. It also included a description of the most common types of torture and ill-treatment, such as: kicks, punches and beatings with batons and other implements; the hooding of detainees and reported practices such as mock executions; electric shocks; partial asphyxiation; and sexual abuse. Details of a sample of recent political and non-political cases were given.

After receiving the Spanish Government's replies to questions by the Committee, the Rapporteur, Ricardo Gil Lavedra (Argentina), stated his concern that all criminal behaviour defined by the Convention should be repressed. He particularly stressed his anxiety over the increase in torture in Spain, the long delays in investigating such cases and the apparent impunity enjoyed by officers found guilty of such crimes. He expressed the wish that Spain adopt measures to improve its compliance with the Convention. The conclusions of the Rapporteur were adopted by the Committee as a whole. In a press conference on 30 April the Committee Chairman, Joseph Voyame (Switzerland), made clear once again the anxiety of the Committee on these points.

During the examination of Spain's report, the Rapporteur and three other experts questioned the government over whether all the acts amounting to torture, as defined by Article 1 of the Convention, were included in the Penal Code. Mr Gil Lavedra also cited specific allegations of torture and ill-treatment and requested information on these incidents as well as an explanation of why the justice system worked so slowly in investigating these incidents. All the experts raised the issue of the operation of the "anti-terrorist" law allowing incommunicado detention and the suspension of certain rights. The co-Rapporteur, Hassib Ben Ammar (Tunisia), and the Canadian expert, Professor Burns, both expressed their disquiet over the very low sentences imposed for crimes of torture and the use of pardons for officers convicted of torture. Mr Ben Ammar concluded that the Spanish Government had problems applying the UN Convention Against Torture strictly. Finally, the Chairman also expressed the hope that the new Penal Code would provide an improved definition of torture in Spanish domestic law.