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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL

PLEASE NOTE: EFAI has a new address from 22 November. Following are their new details: 17, rue du Pont-aux-Choux, 75003 PARIS. Tel: +331 44 59 29 89, Fax: + 331 44 59 29 80, Mac 44 59 29 86, PC 44 59 29 87. Katie Rickards, in the Secretary General's Office at the IS has the full list of individuals' direct numbers, so please contact her if you need it.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137

****India - 15 December** - PLEASE NOTE ** The document is on "disappearances" in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, and is our first document specifically on Jammu and Kashmir for some time. Obviously, this report is an important part of the campaign on political killings and campaigns, and one of the 23 "Lives" is featured in the report, and it is important that we get good worldwide publicity on the news release. Please bear in mind that this document is embargoed for 15 December and do what you can to ensure that your campaign work does not put this embargo at risk. Thank you.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

South Africa - 1 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 151

Human Rights Day Speech - 9 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES 1994

Tunisia - 12 January

USA death penalty - 26 January Open letter to Bill Clinton, around anniversary of his inauguration as President. News item planned.

South Africa - 16 February ** PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE, WHICH IS STILL TO BE CONFIRMED **

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

POLITICAL KILLINGS AND "DISAPPEARANCES" CAMPAIGN SECTION INITIATIVES WEEK 47

Hong Kong section:

The section has arranged a day-long campaign exhibition. A member of the Legislative Council, James To, will open the exhibition with a speech on political killings and "disappearances" and there will be "disappearing acts", children's entertainment, mime and comedy groups. There will also be videos in English and Chinese about human rights abuses in general and photographs of the 24 cases in the campaign.

The media has been invited and the section's message is that the victims of human rights violations, which are a result of deliberate government policies or repression, will not be forgotten.

Irish section:

The annual campaign "Light a Flame for Freedom" is launched in Limerick. The AI Candle Centre has been set up in a central location in a new pedestrian shopping street in the centre of Limerick city, and from here candles and other merchandise will be sold. Moreover there will be an art exhibition focusing on Bosnia and other parts of the world and general information on AI. The Centre will be open to the public for a month until Christmas. The campaign will be launched by the Mayor of Limerick, Jan O'Sullivan as he lights a 12" x 6" diameter candle surrounded by barbed wire. During the day there will be folk and classical musicians playing, a Daghdha Dance group performing, poetry recital, AI members and supporters wearing "faceless" masks and black cloaks will meet outside the Centre and disperse around nearby streets and AI members will be available for interviews by the media.

Related to the Political Killings and "Disappearance" Campaign there are three postcards enclosed with every candle, respectively on cases in Sudan and Iran and on prisoners of conscience in Peru. The public is asked to send these postcards to the authorities in question and an Appeal Postbox is opened. One of the cases from last year, Vera Chirwa from Malawi, was released in January 1993, so this approach should prove to be popular. This event is one of the section's largest fund raising events of the year.

AI INDEX: ASA 25/WU 04/93
24 November 1993

SOUTH KOREA: AI DELEGATES RETURN FROM VISIT WITH NEW EVIDENCE OF VIOLATIONS

A delegation from Amnesty International has just returned from a research visit to South Korea, where they found further evidence of continuing human rights violations, including hundreds of political prisoners, torture and new arrests of prisoners of conscience.

A two-member delegation visited South Korea from 1 to 17 November and found that human rights abuses continue under the new government which took office in February. Although a willingness on the part of the government to carry out reform was expressed, the human rights violations which Amnesty International has criticized for many years still continue.

Some 350 political prisoners continue to be held in South Korea, a sizeable portion of whom are believed to be prisoners of conscience or possible prisoners of conscience. Around 250 of these prisoners are held under the National Security Law which restricts the rights to freedom of expression and association. Prisoners arrested since the new government took office in February include students and academics held solely for their research work on socialist and reunification issues. There are over 70 prisoners serving terms of between 7 years and life imprisonment, many of whom are believed to have been tortured and convicted after unfair trials. Two prisoners who were captured during the Korean War have been held for over 40 years.

Since February of this year, Amnesty International has urged the government to amend the National Security Law, so that the rights of freedom of expression and association are fully protected, and to release prisoners of conscience - unfortunately, the organization has learned that the government has no plans to amend the National Security Law.

Political prisoners continue to be detained by the Police and the Agency for National Security Planning (ANSP) without proper warrants of arrest. They continue to be deprived of sleep and beaten during interrogation in order to force them to make a "confession".

Amnesty International has also expressed concern about illegal arrests, torture and ill-treatment carried out by the police and the ANSP, such as the arrests in September of brother and sister Kim Sam-sok and Kim Un-ju who were detained without arrest warrants and subjected to sleep deprivation, beatings and sexual abuse by the ANSP.

The organization has urged the government to introduce measures to ensure that detainees rights are fully protected and to investigate all reports of past human rights abuses. It has also sought an end to executions and the abolition of the death penalty. The delegates urged the authorities to commute the death sentences of all prisoners under sentence of death, believed to be around 50.

Amnesty International's comments and reports on the human rights situation in South Korea are based upon years of detailed research work on that country. Its London-based researchers are specialists in human rights research work on North and South Korea, Taiwan and Japan. They have collected and analyzed information from a wide variety of sources, including legal documents and judicial authorities.

While in South Korea, Amnesty International's two representatives also met a wide variety of sources including lawyers, academics, lawmakers, journalists and former prisoners. They met the Director of the Human Rights Division of the Ministry of Justice and requested but were denied a meeting with the National Police Administration. An offer to meet officials of the ANSP came shortly before the delegation was due to leave the country and could not therefore be taken up.

Amnesty International has constantly sought a dialogue with the government. Over the past year some 300 Amnesty International groups in countries throughout the world wrote to the South Korean Government about some 100 prisoner cases. Some groups met embassy officials in their own countries and the International Secretariat has frequently met with embassy officials in London.

Said the organization: "We are very disappointed that human rights violations have persisted under the new government in South Korea. An opportunity to make a new start for human rights has been lost."