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EXTERNAL:

- **PINOCHET CASE (This item has been distributed to regional media and wire agencies)**
- **FRY - KOSOVO -- PUBLIC STATEMENT**
- **ASEM MEETING (This item is for Sections to distribute as they see fit)**

CAMPAIGNS AND MAJOR INITIATIVES

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UDHR CAMPAIGN - SEE NS 191/98, 212/98, 227/98, 234/98, 237/98, 239/98, 240/98, 241/98, 242/98, 243/98.

PLANNED NEWS RELEASES with an indication of the planned distribution -- Please note that planned distribution is subject to changes.

APRIL

- USA CAMPAIGN (ASYLUM SEEKERS)(SEE NS 026/99)-- international
- FRY (SEE NS 026/99) – regional

- INDONESIA -- REPORT ON IMPUNITY
- WED 7 --USA CAMP. PRESS EVENT - GENEVA (SEE NS 026/99) -- international
- TUE 13 -- PERU (SEE NS 005/99) -- Peru/regional
- TUE 20 -- TURKEY (IMPUNITY ACTION)
- WED 21 -- CHINA -- REPORT ON XINJANG -- international
- TUE 27 -- ZAMBIA -- REPORT ON POLICING

MAY

- USA CAMPAIGN (RACE AND DP) (SEE NS 252/98) -- international
- RUSSIAN FEDERATION (CHILDREN) (SEE NS 026/99)
- THU 13 -- TOGO -- REPORT
- TUE 25 -- USA CAMPAIGN:RACE AND DEATH PENALTY
- THU 27 -- CHINA -- TIANANMEN SQUARE 10TH ANNIV. — international

JUNE

- HRs EDUCATION IN AFRICA (SEE NS 248/98) -- international (POSTPONED)
- THURS 10 --USA CAMPAIGN (MSP)(SEE NS 026/99)-- international
- THURS 24 -- USA CAMP. (MENTAL HEALTH AND DP) (SEE NS 252/98) --int'l
- WED 30 --BRAZIL (SEE NS 026/99) -- regional (new date)

EVENTS AND MISSIONS

The details below are for your information only, and there may or may not be media work

involved. **Please do not publicize anything until further notice from the IS.**

AI INDEX: EUR 45/17/99
26 MARCH 1999

Pinochet case: One person tortured is one too many

“Under the Convention against Torture, even a single act of torture gives rise to criminal responsibility before the world,” Amnesty International reminded the UK Home Secretary, Jack Straw, as he reviews the case for Augusto Pinochet’s extradition to Spain.

“Jack Straw should not forget that, under the Convention against Torture, the United Kingdom is obliged to proceed with extradition or to conduct a trial in the UK,” Amnesty International stressed. “The law and not politics should guide his decision.”

Despite the legal impediments to bringing Augusto Pinochet to justice on the full range of charges raised by the Spanish extradition request, the fact that thousands of people were victims of crimes against humanity, including torture, murder and “disappearances”, during the government of former general Pinochet remains undisputed.

The House of Lords’ ruling itself clearly states that “there is no real dispute that during the period of the Senator Pinochet regime, appalling acts of barbarism were committed in Chile and elsewhere in the world: torture, murder and the unexplained disappearance of individuals, all on a large scale.”

“Although it is not alleged that Senator Pinochet himself committed any of those acts, it is alleged that they were done in pursuance of a conspiracy to which he was a party, at his instigation and with his knowledge,” the ruling continues.

The House of Lords’ landmark ruling should not be rendered ineffective by the misleading impression that the remaining charges against Augusto Pinochet -- including one case of torture and certain conspiracies to torture -- are somehow ‘not enough’ to justify his extradition and trial.

The opinion by Lord Hope of Craighead discussed only the three cases after 8 December 1988 -- which were listed in the sample draft charges prepared during the course of the second hearing to assist the House of Lords in understanding what charges in Spain would look like in an English court. It is not a complete list of all the crimes included in the extradition request.

“Now that the House of Lords has reaffirmed the principle that heads of state are not immune from charges of torture, the Home Secretary must not lose sight of the fact that the pain of one human being, the blood of even a single victim, is as worthy of justice as the suffering of thousands,” Amnesty International said.

One of the crimes for which the House of Lords' ruled Augusto Pinochet could still be extradited involves the torture to death of a 17-year-old boy, Marcos Quesada Yañez. Arrested by police on 24 June 1989, Marcos is said to have been subjected to severe electric shocks.

Given that at present Augusto Pinochet is covered by parliamentary immunity in Chile -- in his capacity as Senator for life -- and by the provisions of the 1978 amnesty law -- Amnesty International is calling on Jack Straw not to block an avenue for justice left open to victims of human rights violations committed during Pinochet's government.

"The Home Secretary, as he did last December, should let the judiciary examine the cases still pending against the former general," Amnesty International said. "Let the courts decide."

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To arrange an interview or to receive a copy of the media pack, please call Soraya Bermejo, Press Officer: Tel: (+44) 171 413 5562 Mobile: (+44) 468 670 248

AI INDEX: IOR 30/09/99
26 March 1999

Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM): Still failing the human rights test

If ASEM Foreign Ministers again fail to put human rights issues on the agenda as they gather in Berlin, it will cast doubts on the credibility of the ASEM process, Amnesty International said today.

“Serious human rights violations occur regularly in both Europe and Asia. ASEM Foreign Ministers can no longer bury their collective heads in the sand when it comes to discussing human rights issues,” Amnesty International said.

“So far the ASEM process has failed many victims of human rights violations in both regions. Unless the political dialogue process starts to address human rights issues now it risks losing touch with reality.”

The Asian economic crisis has shown that human rights protection and respect are fundamental to establishing transparent and accountable systems of governance. Without freedom of expression and association, efforts to build economic reforms or address underlying issues such as corruption will remain fundamentally flawed. ASEM has so far failed to address this basic link.

In Europe, asylum procedures increasingly fail to protect refugees' human rights and risk sending people directly into situations where they are at risk of torture, arbitrary imprisonment or death. Similarly, issues of racism and police ill-treatment in the region, particularly against vulnerable groups such as migrant workers, also need to be addressed urgently.

Civil society and independent non-governmental organisations have largely been left out or forced to the fringes of the ASEM process. They must be included as key components of the development of any meaningful relationship between the Europe and Asia, especially as many of the concerns taken up by ASEM governments have a direct impact on civil society.

“ASEM leaders missed a golden opportunity to place human rights at the heart of the Asia-Europe relationship when they met in the 50th anniversary year of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1998,” Amnesty International said. “A meaningful partnership between Asia and Europe should have human rights and civil society at its very heart.”

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News Service: 060/99

AI INDEX: EUR 70/18/99

26 March 1999

PUBLIC STATEMENT

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA – KOSOVO

HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS DEEPENS -- MILITARY INTELLIGENCE MAY BE VITAL DETERRENT

Amnesty International has just learned the tragic news of the killing of the prominent ethnic Albanian human rights lawyer Bajram Kelmendi and his two sons -- one of whom is a minor -- who had been taken from their home in Priština by Serbian police in the early hours of 25 March.

The organization condemns their deliberate and arbitrary killings and calls on the Federal Yugoslav authorities to investigate this serious human rights violation as a matter of extreme urgency.

Meanwhile, allegations of further human rights violations by Serbian police or the Yugoslav Army outside Priština are mounting. These include claims from ethnic Albanian sources that a substantial number of ethnic Albanians who have taken shelter in the village of Ćirez in the Drenica region have been surrounded by Yugoslav Army tanks in an effort to deter NATO attacks. It is currently impossible to confirm these allegations.

Should they be confirmed, this would constitute a violation of the Geneva Conventions of 1949 -- to which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is a party -- which prohibit the taking of hostages, whether civilians or combatants hors de combat.

Monitoring the situation in the area is becoming increasingly difficult as the main international monitoring mission, that of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, withdrew its observers last week as a result of the increased likelihood of a military intervention by NATO.

In addition, foreign journalists of NATO member states -- who appeared to make up the bulk of the foreign press corps -- have either been expelled by the authorities or have withdrawn for fear for their own security.

In the absence of international observers on the ground in Kosovo, Amnesty International calls upon states with substantial reconnaissance and intelligence capabilities to monitor the human rights and humanitarian situation in the area, to make public the information available where appropriate, and share fuller details with the relevant international organizations. It may be important that states inside and outside of NATO do this.

Amnesty International believes that it is vital to reveal whether the allegations of violations of humanitarian or human rights law are true or not and to send a clear message that such violations are unacceptable and are being documented. Knowledge that perpetrators may be held accountable is a vital deterrent.

The organization is reiterating its appeals to the authorities to refrain from violating the basic human rights of their citizens and to stop targeting independent journalists, opposition politicians and human rights workers.

The current state of war declared by the government on 24 March should not serve as a pretext to suspend these rights which the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is bound by international standards to uphold under all circumstances.

Additional information

Earlier unconfirmed reports suggested that Bajram Kelmendi had been released. However, the Belgrade-based Humanitarian Law Centre reported that his body and those of his sons were found just outside Priština on the road to Kosovo Polje. According to a relative of the Kelmendi family, who saw the bodies, the victims had been shot dead. Local police have reportedly initiated an investigation into the killings.

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