
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 07/95

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **SUDAN** - EMBARGOED FOR 25 JANUARY (will be sent to International Media), **VIET NAM** (being sent to Asia media plus sent to contacts by the Research Team), **UNITED KINGDOM** (will be sent to British media by the British Section)

INTERNAL - **SUDAN, AV NEWS UPDATE**

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Sudan - 25 January - SEE NEWS SERVICES 275 AND 261

UN Commission on Human Rights - 31 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 06/95

Turkey - 8 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 261

Northern Iraq - 28 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 266

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

AUDIO-VISUAL NEWS

Dear press officers and AV officers,
I have moved from the Press Office to the Audio-visual team as Audio-visual Production Coordinator. Adam LLOYD is Audio-visual Producer, but will be away until March, so I will act up on his behalf until then. I look forward to working with you on audio-visual matters. Yours, Paula Seager.

New AV Products

We have produced two mini-ENRs embargoed to go with the Section Level Actions on **Turkey** (8 Feb) and **Northern Iraq** (28 Feb). The IS Press Office will be distributing these to international tv agencies at their embargo times, but the ENRs will not automatically be distributed to sections. If you want copies of one/both of them, please send a fax request to Anne Jenkins at the IS stating what format you require. The script to go with these ENRs is in English only.

Popular music needed by Norwegian Section

The Norwegian Section is working on a new promotional video directed at young people and are looking for popular music that AI has the rights to use in videos. If you have any such rights or ideas on how they can get cheap/free rights to popular music, please contact John Eigenist at the Norwegian Section Press Office.

Women and Human Rights Campaign

An ENR to be used at the launch of this campaign is currently being made. If you know of any particularly good footage that could be used in it, please let Paula know ASAP (X5560). Further info on AV materials will be sent in a News Service shortly.

EMBARGOED UNTIL 25 JANUARY 1995
AI INDEX AFR 54/WU 02/95

SUDAN: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN ON RIGHTS ABUSES IN SUDAN

NAIROBI -- The United Nations (UN) should create an international civilian human rights monitoring team as a first step in breaking the cycle of abuses in both the government-controlled north and the war-torn south of Sudan, Amnesty International said today as it launched its first major campaign of 1995.

"Having international monitors on the ground would make it more difficult for government and opposition forces to get away with the killings, torture and detentions that have fractured Sudanese society and deepened political hatreds over the past five years," said Pierre Sané, Secretary General of Amnesty International, speaking at a press conference in Nairobi.

With the government blocking the UN's human rights expert on Sudan from entering the country and with the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) peace process showing little progress, Mr Sané said that the need for the international community to intensify human rights monitoring has never been greater.

"Sudan's future depends on greater respect for human rights being established throughout the country," Mr Sané said. "The carnage in the war-torn south is only half the picture, because even in areas less affected by civil war, the brutal violation of human rights has also divided the population."

In arguing for the UN to establish human rights monitors, he stressed that the human rights disaster in which thousands have been detained and tens of thousands killed lies at the heart of the humanitarian emergency facing the country.

"The UN provides relief aid at vast expense to deal with the consequences of war and human rights abuse, but this is not enough," said Mr Sané. "Solving Sudan's serious human rights problems is a priority."

The organization said such human rights monitors should:

- report human rights abuses to the authorities and the UN and follow up individual cases of abuse to make sure that action is taken
- provide an independent body where Sudanese can report human rights violations, without fear of reprisals
- work with the authorities on improving human rights policies and practices in the country

In its 132-page report on the human rights situation in Sudan since the 1989 coup, the organization shows that the military government led by President

Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir and both the main armed opposition factions -- the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) led by John Garang de Mabior and the South Sudan Independence Army (SSIA) led by Riek Machar Teny-Dhurgon -- are guilty of committing gross abuses of human rights.

Since coming to power, the Sudanese government has made torture and the detention of suspected opponents in so-called "ghost houses" -- the security forces' secret detention centres -- standard practice throughout the country as it crushes political opposition and attempts to mould society to its own version of a radical Islamist agenda.

Many suspected government opponents -- trade unionists, activists in banned political parties, students, journalists, southerners suspected of supporting armed opposition groups -- are arrested, tortured, held for short periods, released and then re-detained.

Despite government denials, Amnesty International has documented the torture of hundreds of people since 1989 both in the capital, Khartoum, and other towns, as well as in the southern war-zone. A judge trying Gaafar Yassin and four others on conspiracy charges in 1994 accepted medical evidence they had been beaten, burnt, whipped with plastic piping and made to stand barefoot on hot metal -- but still imposed prison sentences. This travesty of justice shows how repeated government purges have made the supposedly independent judiciary compliant to political manipulation.

Each time prisoners of conscience are arrested, if only for a brief period, Amnesty International fears for their safety, such as during the mass arrest of scores of trade unionists in the northern town of Atbara in October 1994. Amnesty also remains seriously concerned about the well-being of 12 southern civil servants and others detained last month in Juba, the main town in the south. Their whereabouts are still unknown.

In the war zones of the south and the Nuba Mountains, government forces, the SPLA and the SSIA (formerly known as SPLA-United) have all been responsible for the killing and "disappearance" of thousands of civilians creating a humanitarian catastrophe of famine and the mass movement of millions of people. All parties to the conflict have driven villagers from their land, and looted and destroyed crops and property.

In June 1994, for example, an Amnesty International research team in southern Sudan interviewed survivors of a series of indiscriminate killings by troops of the government's Popular Defence Force (PDF) militia along a railway line linking north and south Sudan. A scorched-earth campaign by government forces in the area has involved hundreds of political killings, rape, the abduction of children and the displacement of thousands of civilians. There was further killing and looting by PDF last month.

Gross human rights abuses occur during interfactional fighting among the armed opposition. The SPLA, which ruthlessly suppresses internal dissent, has been responsible for hundreds of killings of Nuer civilians. Prisoners of conscience have been detained, tortured and killed. In August 1994, SPLA troops abducted at least 17 men -- among them Carlo Madut Deng, a doctor who had resigned from the SPLA -- from a refugee camp in northern Uganda. The men are believed to have been killed.

After the split in the opposition movement in 1991, the breakaway group, now called the SSIA, massacred thousands of Dinka civilians and displaced over 200,000 others. In October 1994, SSIA forces attacked and looted cattle camps around Akot, killing over 100 civilians.

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SUDAN CAMPAIGN'S MEDIA OBJECTIVE OF PLACING SUDAN CAMPAIGN ARTICLES IN NGO PUBLICATIONS: SOME RESEARCH AND INITIAL REACTIONS

In November and December, we have contacted the publications departments at a number of NGO's active in the Sudan under the umbrella of Operation Lifeline Sudan with the aim of trying a new approach in AI outreach for the upcoming Sudan campaign: namely, the possibility of publishing pre-packaged articles or other material submitted to them by Amnesty International on the human rights situation in the Sudan.

The results of the initial canvassing were mixed but not without distinct signs of encouragement, with several groups expressing some basic interest in either an article or other materials. However, each organization seems to have a different set of needs, making it impossible for us to propose a package formula for all sections or simply to dispatch a generic article to the organizations we know are active in Sudan.

For example, the editor of "World Children", the principal publication at Save the Children said that they would only publish project-related work. Yet the door was not slammed and we were referred to their smaller publication targeted at young readers called "Right Angle." There, the editor was in fact enthusiastic about a short item about children's issues (the rounding up of street children in the capital, for example) with the aim of using it to pitch involvement by its readership in AI. Thus even in the same organization there can exist two conflicting responses to our proposal.

Some organizations might be interested in other types of materials. In the case of Christian Aid, whose publication "Christian Aid News" has a circulation of 220,000, we were told that an article or opinion piece as such would not be appropriate. However, several viable options presented to us by the editor included: a review of the Amnesty report, a small box on Amnesty's position of human rights to be inserted in one of their news features and photographs for a photo essay. Here, we were told to stay in touch, for the earliest date any material would be published would be next April.

Then there are those groups, such as the Belgium-based Medecins Sans Frontieres, which actually seemed keen on publishing an article submitted by AI containing an overview of the human rights situation in the Sudan. (The piece would be translated by MSF itself from English). Though there would be no guarantee of publication, the prospect of getting the article into their in-house "Contact" or their quarterly with a circulation of 450,000 makes the endeavour seem worthwhile.

In conclusion, we feel that the sections should at this point themselves take the initiative with the NGO's in their region, taking it on a case-by-case basis. Only this way can you effectively gauge the interest of the publications department and tailor our proposal to their needs. We suggest going straight to the head of publications to propose one of the following:

1. a generic article outlining the terrible tragedy of human rights abuses in the Sudan
2. the AI report itself for review
3. photographs with captions
4. other materials that they can use for an article to be drafted themselves.

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UNITED KINGDOM: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGATIONS OF SALES OF ELECTRIC SHOCK BATONS AND LEG IRONS

Amnesty International is calling for the British government to hold an investigation into allegations made in a television documentary broadcast in the United Kingdom tonight (Wednesday 11 January 1995, 21.00hrs).

The allegations – that UK companies have supplied and are promoting the sale of electric shock batons and leg irons to security forces which practice torture, and that this trade has taken place with the knowledge and approval of the UK Government – are made in a special edition of Channel 4's current affairs programme Dispatches.

"The allegations made in this documentary are extremely serious. The UK and other governments must provide a detailed explanation of the apparent failure to take human rights considerations into account when allowing this trade", said Amnesty International.

The human rights organisation is demanding that:

- **all exports of military, security and police equipment are publicly disclosed in advance so that the British Parliament can exercise proper control to prevent human rights violations;**
- **the UK Government review its laws and procedures to ensure that transfers of military, security and police equipment are prohibited unless it can be reasonably shown that such transfers will not contribute to torture and other grave human rights violations;**
- **effective channels are established for the UK Government to receive information from non-governmental organisations on human rights aspects of such exports;**
- **the human rights situation in any country receiving such equipment is taken into consideration before any decision is made to allow such exports to proceed.**

Amnesty International will continue to appeal to companies which manufacture or trade in electric shock equipment or leg irons not to sell such equipment to security forces that are known to torture or carry out cruel and inhuman treatment.

The organization also believes that representatives of security forces which carry out human rights violations should not be invited to attend exhibitions that promote the sale of security equipment and technology and that any proposed sale or transfer from such exhibitions should be made public.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has repeatedly called for an immediate end to the practice of torture and ill-treatment of prisoners and detainees using electric shock devices and leg cuffs.

The organisation has received testimony from torture victims in countries including China, Saudi Arabia and Turkey who say they were tortured with hand-held electric shock devices, including batons and rods.

In China, assaults with electric shock batons are among the most common methods of torture and are reported to occur in virtually all places of detention. An electric shock from a baton can cause severe pain and affects muscle control; victims often feel nauseous and may have convulsions or faint under the shock. Shocks with batons are often applied to sensitive parts of the body, such as armpits, neck, face, chest, inside part of the legs, soles of the feet, inside of the mouth and ears, genitals and inside the vagina.

Sonam Dolkar, a 26-year-old woman in Tibet was detained on suspicion of being a Tibetan independence sympathiser. She was detained for months and repeatedly tortured with shocks from wires attached to her body. Electric batons were also applied to her face and every part of her body including her vagina. Eventually she was vomiting and urinating blood daily and was moved to a police hospital, from where she managed to escape to India.

Electric shock torture is commonly used to torture political and criminal detainees in police stations in Turkey. In April 1994 Fahri Ferda Cetin, the General Publishing Manager of the newspaper Ozgur Gundem was held in incommunicado detention in Istanbul Police Headquarters and reportedly suspended by his arms and given electric shocks to his sexual organs and feet.

Amnesty International has also received reports of prisoners and detainees in a number of countries having been tortured and cruelly treated using leg irons and leg cuffs.

In one case, a boy was arrested in 1980 when he was 12 years old. He was then illegally detained for 12 years. For 11 of those years he was held in leg irons.

In 1992 Amnesty International reported that leg irons made by Birmingham-based company Hiatts were being used in Malawi. Orton Chirwa, a 72-year-old lawyer, was reportedly handcuffed and leg ironed in a squatting position, with cuffs and irons attached to a metal bar behind his knees. He died in prison in October 1992. Following Amnesty International's campaign, Hiatts ceased manufacture of the leg-irons in the United Kingdom.

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VIET NAM: VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES ARREST LEADING DISSIDENT MONKS

Amnesty International is calling on the Vietnamese authorities to immediately release Supreme Patriarch Thich Huyen Quang and his deputy Thich Quang Do -- two Vietnamese monks arrested in recent weeks.

These monks are prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their religious beliefs. They should be released immediately and unconditionally, Amnesty International said today.

The Supreme Patriarch of the banned Unified Buddhist Church of Viet Nam (UBCV), Thich Huyen Quang, was arrested by the Vietnamese authorities in central Viet Nam on 29 December 1994. The Vietnamese government is denying the arrest. Thich Huyen Quang, who was under house arrest at his pagoda since 1982, was reportedly taken into custody by the authorities in Quang Ngai after he began a hunger strike to protest the arrest of several monks in November.

Thich Huyen Quang's deputy, Thich Quang Do, was taken from his pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City on 4 January 1995. He is currently detained in the city Security Police Detention Centre. Thich Quang Do was under house arrest in central Viet Nam following an order from the Vietnamese authorities in 1982. He returned to his pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City in 1992, and took a leading role in the activities of the UBCV.

"Freedom of belief, expression and association is guaranteed by the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights, to which Viet Nam is a state party, and the arrest and detention of these monks is a clear violation of Viet Nam's obligations under this Covenant," Amnesty International said.

The arrests are the latest in a severe crackdown on the UBCV by the Vietnamese authorities. Formed in 1951, the UBCV was prominent in the anti-war movement in South Viet Nam during the 1960s. It was banned by the communist government in 1981, but many members of the church both in Viet Nam and overseas continue to follow the teachings of its monks.

The Vietnamese authorities have accused some members of the UBCV of engaging in "activities aimed at overthrowing the people's government" and "disrupting public order". Both Thich Huyen Quang and Thich Quang Do have criticised the Vietnamese Government's human rights record and called for religious freedom in the country.

The latest round of arrests began in November 1994, after disturbances in the central city of Hue. Following severe flooding in the Mekong Delta, when thousands lost their homes and several hundred people died, the UBCV organised a flood relief mission.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, monks involved in the organization of the flood relief mission were confined to their pagodas, and a number of them were arrested. One of those arrested is Thich Long Tri; a key organiser of the mission, who was initially confined to his pagoda in Danang, but is now in custody. Other monks arrested include Thich Thai Hung and Thich Hanh Duc, who were taken into custody on 25 December 1994. They may be prisoners of conscience.

Although the Vietnamese Constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of worship and religious practice, it also states that "no one may misuse religion to violate state law and practice". This has resulted in restrictions on freedom of religious worship in the country, as the Vietnamese Government has sought to control all religious institutions.

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