
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 21/95

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 27 JANUARY 1995

AI INDEX: NWS 11/21/95
DISTR: SC/PO
NO OF WORDS: 1992

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **TURKEY**: Please note the embargo of 0001 HRS GMT 8 February; **ALBANIA**: for response only (this is of particular interest to the Greek Section); **UZBEKISTAN**: (being sent to Russia media by the research team)

INTERNAL - **SUDAN, DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE EUROPEAN PRESS OFFICERS' MEETING** (this is issued by the British Section and is only applicable to the European Sections)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

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

Campaign on Women - 8 March

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

INTERNAL

EUROPEAN PRESS OFFICERS MEETING - THURSDAY 9 FEBRUARY 1994

The meeting will be held at the International Secretariat (meeting room in 25 Easton Street), beginning at 10.30am.

DRAFT AGENDA

General Introduction from David Bull, AIBS Director

Review of 1994 European Press Officers' Meeting in Amsterdam including minutes

Regional co-operation between sections; sharing resources/materials/ideas

Review of the Sudan Campaign launch; evaluation of strategy; future plans

Discussion of crisis response/use of news service

Conclusion and Recommendations

We are keen to have as much input to the agenda from other sections as possible.

Any amendments to this draft agenda or suggestions should reach Richard Bunting/Kirstie Jones at AI British Section by Tuesday 31 January. Also please let us know if you would like to go out for a meal on the evening of Thursday 9 February.

News Service 21/95

AI INDEX: EUR 44/WU 03/95
EMBARGOED FOR 0001 HRS GMT 8 FEBRUARY 1995

TURKEY: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS OUT OF CONTROL AS GOVERNMENT MAINTAINS POLICY OF DENIAL

Turkish security forces are committing human rights violations every day and will continue to do so until the Turkish Government ends its policy of blank denial, Amnesty International said in a report released today.

The increasing number of human rights violations by the security forces in the southeast of Turkey has been matched by the actions of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) which has carried out summary "executions" and killed civilians during attacks on Kurdish communities believed to support the government. These abuses have continued despite a declaration by the PKK, in December 1994, that it would abide by common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions which protects civilians and prisoners.

In an attempt to conceal the scale of human rights violations in Turkey the government has prosecuted Turkish human rights defenders, closed down branches of the Turkish Human Rights Association and taken other measures curtailing the freedom of opposition press and political organizations. In September 1994 Amnesty International's researcher on Turkey was forbidden entry to the country.

"The Turkish Government's policy of denial has led to the increase in torture, "disappearances" and extrajudicial killings perpetrated with impunity by security forces throughout the country," the human rights organization said today.

In November 1994, a joint statement by the European Union with Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden at the Conference on Security and Co-operation (CSCE) (now called the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, (OSCE)) Review Conference in Budapest, urged Turkey to invite a CSCE mission to look at the human rights situation in the country and to make proposals for reform. Turkey has so far refused to accept such a mission.

Members of the international community should also ensure that transfers of military and security equipment do not contribute to human rights violations. Amnesty International has received reports that armoured vehicles, helicopters and other aircraft have been used in security force operations in southeast Turkey when human rights violations were committed. In several cases, people who have since "disappeared" were last seen being taken away in helicopters by the security forces. France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States are among the countries which supply such types of equipment to Turkey.

"We are urging governments which authorize the supply of military and security equipment to Turkey to ensure such supplies are not used to commit human rights violations," Amnesty International said.

"If they do not receive and monitor such guarantees, governments should halt their transfers".

Amnesty International first began receiving reports of "disappearances" in custody in Turkey four years ago. Despite persistent warnings to the government the number of such cases has only increased. In 1994 there were more than 50 reported "disappearances".

While villagers in the provinces of southeast Turkey under a state of emergency are still the most frequent victims of violations, the atmosphere of impunity in which soldiers in that area have been allowed to act has spread to police and other security force personnel across the country.

Victims of torture are not only suspected political opponents, but those detained for ordinary criminal offenses too. Last December Abdullah Salman, a 13-year-old boy, was wrongly accused of stealing a wallet at his work place. Abdullah was held in police custody for three days during which he was blindfolded, kicked, beaten and subjected to electric shocks.

In its report, Amnesty International makes a number of specific recommendations for urgent measures that the Turkish Government could immediately take to address systematic human rights violations. The human rights organization is also calling on the international community to translate its expressions of concern at escalating human rights violations in Turkey into appropriate action by organizations such as the OSCE and the United Nations.

ENDS\

News Service 21/95

AI INDEX: EUR 11/WU 01/95
27 JANUARY 1995

ALBANIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RENEWS APPEAL TO PRESIDENT BERISHA ON BEHALF OF ETHNIC GREEKS

Amnesty International is renewing an earlier appeal to President Berisha of Albania on behalf of four ethnic Greeks convicted of treason by espionage last year.

The four Greeks, together with a fifth defendant who has since been released, are leaders of the "Omonia" organization representing the Greek minority in Albania. They were convicted at a trial in Tirana in September last year and their cases are now due for final review by the Court of Cassation on 8 February.

In its appeal to the President, Amnesty International reiterated its concerns that breaches of the defendants' right to a fair and open trial and the weakness of the evidence in support of the charges seriously undermined the convictions. The organization said these concerns were reinforced by allegations made by the defendants, and also a number of witnesses, that statements they made during investigation proceedings were obtained from them by ill-treatment, threats or other coercion.

Amnesty International welcomes the release of one of the five defendants and the reduction of sentences imposed on his four co-defendants at the end of 1994. It is, however, urging that the above concerns be taken into account, as well as the fact that the defendants were convicted under a Criminal Code which is shortly to be replaced. The organization also noted that three of the defendants were convicted of the illegal possession of arms and recalled that others convicted of this offence were released under an amnesty in November last year.

ENDS\

AI INDEX: EUR 62/WU 01/95
27 JANUARY 1995

UZBEKISTAN: OPPOSITION ACTIVISTS ON TRIAL FOR PREPARING ANTI-STATE VIOLENCE
MAY HAVE CONFESSED AFTER TORTURE

Confessions possibly made under torture are being used in the prosecution of seven opposition activists in Uzbekistan, Amnesty International said today, as it called on the authorities to ensure that procedures for a fair trial are observed scrupulously.

The trial of the seven -- who were charged with preparing anti-state violence -- is set to resume on 30 January.

The defendants, six men and one woman, are activists in the outlawed *Erk* (Freedom) political party. They have been accused of crimes including conspiracy to seize power and calling for the violent overthrow of the state. The charges carry a possible death sentence.

The case against them centres on allegations that the *Erk* party has been preparing to carry out terrorist acts to overthrow the government of President Islam Karimov. The exiled leader of *Erk*, Muhammad Salih, has denied suggestions that he has advocated violence to bring down the government. To date no anti-government terrorist acts are known to have occurred in Uzbekistan.

The defendants in the Supreme Court trial, which opened in October 1994 but has been repeatedly adjourned, are Murad Dzhurayev, Nemat Akhmedov, Khoshim Suvanov, Shavkat Mamatov, Shavkat Khalbayev, Erkin Ashurov and Dilarom Iskhakova. All but Ashurov and Iskhakova reportedly incriminated themselves and others in statements during interrogation, but their supporters claim that these were made under duress.

A visitor who saw four of the men in prison in August 1994 reported seeing bruising which may have come from beatings. One of the defendants also reportedly spent six months in pre-trial detention without once seeing a defence lawyer.

Amnesty International is calling on the authorities to investigate allegations that evidence in this case may have been obtained under duress. It is also calling on the authorities to rule any such evidence inadmissible in court, and to bring to justice anyone found to have obtained evidence through torture or ill-treatment.

Erk was Uzbekistan's only legally registered opposition party until it was effectively outlawed by new registration requirements in 1993. Repression of party activists increased significantly during 1994, including widespread arrests of people found in possession of the *Erk* party newspaper.

ENDS\

INTERNAL

News Service 21/95

AI INDEX: AFR 54/WU 06/95
27 JANUARY 1995

SUDAN UPDATE

Please use the following information to help with answering any press queries you may get about the Sudan Government's statement (dated 25 January) on AI's Sudan Campaign launch. We'll let you know early next week if there is going to be a news item dealing with government and other responses to the campaign message. If you would like a full copy of the Sudan Government's statement, please call us and we will fax it to you.

The Sudan Government statement contains the following main elements:

- ◆It accuses AI of not going to Sudan for six years, despite the government's repeated invitations;
- ◆It accuses AI of "hating" Sudan's Islamic orientation;
- ◆It accuses AI of "embracing" the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA);
- ◆It accuses AI of recycling old allegations based on second hand sources;
- ◆It emphasizes that Sudan is an open country and anyone can go the country for themselves to see for themselves the true situation;
- ◆It does not reject the possibility of AI going to Sudan on a visit in late March 1995, as discussed by AI's Geneva office with the Sudanese Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva a few days before the launch.

Most of these points are already covered by the Q & A (See News Service 03/95, AI Index: AFR 54/01/95) -- specifically the responses given to questions three, four, five, and nine. Please also see the additional information below.

Our line is that we are sorry that the Sudan Government has chosen to respond to our report by making a rather generalized attack on AI and we hope that in the next few weeks they will have the time to reflect on the serious issues we raise and will see the need for them to be addressed.

Additional points

- ◆**On AI not visiting Sudan:** AI has twice proposed dates -- in June 1994 and in September 1994 and even applied for visas in June. Even though the government has indicated that in principle a visit is possible, each time AI has put dates forward the government has said they are not appropriate.

On 25 November 1994 AI wrote to the Justice Minister seeking a visit in February or March 1995. A few days before the campaign launch, the Sudan's Permanent Mission to the UN called AI's representative in Geneva and said that a visit in the final week in March 1995 would be possible.

AI welcomes this and is keen to visit at that time in order to maintain its dialogue on the serious issues raised in our report.

- ◆The government's willingness to let anyone go to Sudan and see the situation for themselves is to be welcomed -- despite our difficulties, to date, of getting access and their ban on the UN Special Rapporteur on Sudan. We hope that this means that in principle they are prepared to accept human rights monitors.