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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **CAMBODIA** (to be given to international media at conference in Paris -- see note below); **INDIA** (to be used proactively as press officers see fit)

INTERNAL - **CHINA**

** EFAI PLEASE NOTE: The enclosed item on Cambodia is for priority translation. Can you please E-Mail a copy of the translation as soon as it is done. Thanks
- Androulla

PLEASE NOTE: We are sending to press officers an excellent editorial published by The Statesman of India that defends Amnesty International's report "India: Torture and deaths in custody in Jammu and Kashmir." There has been a spate of articles critical of AI in the Indian media recently as the Indian government orchestrates a counter-attack on AI's credibility, so this editorial comes as a good response to allegations of Western bias.

NOTE ON THE CAMBODIA REPORT: We are planning to distribute a just-finalized report on illegal detentions and EJE's in Cambodia at the International Conference on Reconstructing Cambodia opening in Paris on March 14. The release will be targeted through the AI-France section to international journalists attending the conference. The report has just been printed and will be sent in the weekly mailing of 8 March, but the press office has arranged for it to be sent, along with a campaigns SwiftAir mailing, to those sections with Cambodia country coordinators: Sweden, Germany, Netherlands, Australia, Japan, U.S.A., and France. In addition, we will try to e-mail the summary and 68-page document to those sections as well.

Timing for publicity on this report is crucial, not only because of the opening of the conference, but also because Human Rights Watch-Asia may also release a similar report on the same day. In addition, we believe that the Far Eastern Economic Review may break the 14 March embargo and print an article on the report on Friday 10 March, so sections may receive queries. The Cambodia researcher (Demelza Stubbings) here at the I.S. will stand by on 10 March, 13 March and 14 March to field any interviews you wish to pass to her. Please refer your journalists to the I.S. Press Office so we can coordinate these interviews.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Campaign on Women - 7 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 12/95, 34/95, 37/95, 42/95 & 44/95

Brazil - 27 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 29/95

RWANDA - 6 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

SYRIA - 11 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 32/95

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

CAMBODIA - 14 MARCH - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

EVENTS AND MISSIONS

The details below are for your information only, and there may or may not be media work involved. Can you please not publicize anything until further notice from the IS.

MISSION TO BURUNDI 13 - 27 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

MISSION TO KENYA 16 March - 2 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

EMBARGOED UNTIL 14 MARCH 1995

AI INDEX: ASA 23/WU 02/95

CAMBODIA: DONORS SHOULD SEEK ASSURANCES OF HUMAN RIGHTS IMPROVEMENTS

PARIS -- As the International Conference on the Reconstruction of Cambodia (ICORC) opens today in Paris, donor governments should press for improvements in Cambodia's deteriorating human rights situation.

"In the past 18 months, the government of Cambodia has steadily undercut the positive human rights legacy created under the former United Nations administration," Amnesty International said today as it released a report on the erosion of fundamental rights and freedoms in the country.

Amnesty International, which takes no position for or against the imposition of economic sanctions, wants human rights -- both the problems and the solutions -- to be included in discussions at the conference.

"Donor governments gathered in Paris today should be aware of the serious human rights problems in Cambodia and use their links with Cambodian authorities to promote better human rights protection," the organization said.

In publishing the 68-page report, the human rights movement hopes to raise international awareness of the dangers of inaction: the government's failure to prosecute those abusing their positions of power allows violations to continue and threatens the fragile restoration of Cambodia's civil society.

"The government is increasingly intolerant of criticism and legitimate political opposition, and this sometimes has deadly consequences for journalists, editors, human rights activists and outspoken politicians," Amnesty International said. "At the same time, the ethnic Vietnamese minority in Cambodia live in fear of attack and discrimination."

Since the new government took office in 1993, Amnesty International has visited Cambodia twice for investigations and talks with government officials about its human rights concerns. Central to these concerns is the lack of political will to bring human rights violators to justice.

"People with uniforms and guns are able to terrorise the civilian population, while official investigations into human rights violations by the military appear designed to cover up the truth, rather than expose it," the organization said.

Amnesty International has evidence, for example, that soldiers of the S-91 unit of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces in Battambang Province have abducted, illegally detained, extorted, raped and murdered scores of civilians with impunity.

The story of Yam Mouern, a 29-year-old labourer who escaped from secret detention in June 1994 only after being blown up by a land mine, represents the experiences of dozens of others, most of whom have been killed by S-91 personnel. Mouern was kidnapped by S-91 in 1993. Beaten and threatened with death, he watched as another prisoner was shot dead. Nearby villagers told him he was lucky: most captives were immediately killed. Conscripted against his will, Mouern was forced to lay landmines, one of which exploded; he lost both arms and the sight in one eye.

"Despite having clear evidence of S-91's murderous activities, local policemen appear to be as frightened as the rest of the population and have not made any arrests," Amnesty International said. "The lack of action is also explained by S-91's connections that reach high into the ranks of the provincial military apparatus and the upper echelons of the government."

The Royal Government of Cambodia came to power in September 1993, following the elections organised by the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). UNTAC's mandate was agreed in October 1991, when the four warring factions in Cambodia's civil war signed a Peace Agreement in Paris. During UNTAC's mandate, Cambodia became a signatory to most of the international human rights standards, local human rights organizations formed, and a number of independent newspapers sprang up.

Since UNTAC's departure, the Cambodia government has shut down newspapers publishing articles critical of official policies. In addition, journalists have been targeted for death threats. Two newspaper editors were killed in the last months of 1994.

Under Nuon Chan's editorship, the newspaper Samleung Yuvachen Khmer ("Voice of Khmer Youth") published articles about government officials allegedly involved in corruption scandals. In September 1994, Nuon Chan was killed by groups of men on motorcycles, who shot him twice in the back. A 29-year-old journalist, Chan Dara, was also killed in the same manner after investigating an article on military involvement in the timber trade.

The new editor of Samleung Yuvachen Khmer was sentenced to a year's imprisonment in February 1995 for publishing an article in his newspaper.

Amnesty International's report also covers human rights abuses committed by the armed opposition group, the Partie of Democratic Kampuchea (PDK), commonly known as the Khmer Rouge. Grave abuses by PDK members including deliberate and arbitrary killings and forced eviction continue.

Amnesty International condemns these abuses by the opposition unreservedly, and is calling upon the PDK to respect international humanitarian law. However, such abuses by non-governmental entities can never be used as a justification for governments to commit human rights violations.

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STRICTLY INTERNAL: ADVICE TO PRESS OFFICERS

CHINA: GROWING SPECULATION ABOUT DENG XIAOPING'S DECLINING HEALTH

This is to alert press officers that there is growing speculation about the declining health of the 90 year-old Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, who according to some sources is near death, and to prepare for the likely press queries that sections may receive at the time of his death.

During the past few weeks, speculation about Deng Xiaoping's health has increased, fuelled in particular by a report from Deng Xiaoping's daughter in January that her father's health was declining day by day and by his failure to make any public appearance, however brief, during the recent Chinese New Year's celebrations, in contrast with previous years.

On 10 February 1995, an official Chinese publication, Reference News, took the highly unusual step of using the expression "after Deng Xiaoping" in a front-page article. According to observers, this unusual reference is meant to prepare the Chinese public for Deng's death and to signal that the Central authorities are fully prepared for it and that there will be no instability as a result.

No immediate political reshuffle is expected to result from Deng Xiaoping's death. He no longer holds any posts within the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) or government and the question of his "succession" does not arise. Therefore, though power struggles between various factions within the CCP will probably continue behind closed doors, there is no reason to expect immediate and significant changes in the current CCP and Government leadership at the time of Deng Xiaoping's death. Neither are there reasons to expect major policy changes. However, both personnel and policy changes could possibly occur in the months that follow his death. For instance, changes could be adopted at one of the periodic plenary sessions of the CCP Central Committee or at the National People's Congress.

Within China, there is some fear or expectation that disturbances may occur when Deng Xiaoping passes away. According to some reports, the authorities have already taken security measures to deal with such contingencies.

Sections may receive press queries at the time of Deng's death, for instance about the impact that his death might have on the human rights situation in future or about his role in past human rights developments in China. While AI cannot speculate about the future or make a direct link between past human rights violations and a single political leader, we are planning to issue a statement when the time comes, describing briefly AI's concerns and relevant developments during the past year, and calling on the Chinese authorities to stop human rights violations.

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INTERNAL

POSITIVE NEWSPAPER EDITORIAL ON AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S REPORT "INDIA: TORTURE AND DEATHS IN CUSTODY IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR"

Reprint of "Amnesty International", from The Statesman, published in Delhi, Indian on 13 February, 1995 (Vol. CXXXVIII No. 36).

The Government's angry reaction to the latest Amnesty International report --- India: Torture and deaths in custody in Jammu and Kashmir --- was predictable as it was being presented to the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. Much of what the report contains was anticipated. This is not the first time that either Amnesty, or other independent fact-finding teams, and even Indian journalists, have found that gross abuses of human rights were being committed by the security forces in Kashmir without denying the fact that armed opposition groups were also responsible for large-scale crimes of torture, hostage-taking and arbitrary killing of innocent people. The charges have never been squarely met. Amnesty has listed 715 cases of deaths in custody in the State between 1990 and 1994 and the Government have been able to compile information on only 434, and a majority of these were dismissed as deaths in "encounters and cross firing". With the denials unsubstantiated either with post-mortem reports or daily arrest registers, the Government perhaps felt they were absolved of guilt and further questioning could only be with a "vested interest". This is not good enough. In combating armed militant groups the security forces cannot assume the role of gun-totting "officially approved" terrorists. Similar methods were adopted in Mr K.P.S. Gill's Punjab and the bad taste, despite the "peace", remains.

Amnesty admit that this latest report was embargoed till January 31 and that they had asked the Indian Government to reply by January 25. Also on January 9 they had written to the Prime Minister to say that they did not "anticipate changing the text before making it public." They gave their reasons. The Government were unable to inform them that independent and impartial investigations into the specific cases described in the report would be held. Not a single member of the security forces has ever been brought to justice for torture or custodial deaths. The National Human Rights Commission merely called for official reports from the Government when faced with complaints while its Chairman says publicly that the armed forces are beyond his purview. Amnesty may have goofed in the recent past by publishing a photograph of a weeping woman from Tamil Nadu on the cover its Campaign Journal claiming that she was a woman in mourning from Kashmir but were honest enough to admit their mistake and apologise. It would be unfair to use this clumsy slip up to allege perfidy. The organization has been equally scathing in its review of the human rights situation in Pakistan, as also in the United States and other countries worldwide, in their annual report of 1994. The NHRC simply relies upon police reports and whatever official documents the States wish to dole out, its Chairman known for asking favours from Chief Ministers on official visits which are more often than not roadshows. Amnesty's criticism that the Commission functions as a "post box of official views" is well founded. It is not unpatriotic to point out that a malfunctioning human rights commission, official jargon glossing over inaction and proforma denials do not add up to a healthy track record in human rights. My country right or wrong, is not a helpful maxim where the concern ought to be for all humanity.