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PLEASE NOTE: A report on Kosovo: "Police violence against ethnic Albanians in Kosovo province", AI Index: EUR 70/06/94, was accidentally sent out to international correspondents in Yugoslavia by the research team. The document is not yet with sections and will be sent in the Weekly Mailing of 27 April. If you get media queries on this report, or need the report quickly, please contact Joanna Duchesne, Tel: +44 71 413 5683.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Trade Unionists - 29 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 62

Saudi Arabia - 10 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 62

Burundi - 17 May - SEE NEWS SERVICES 81/94, 53/94 and 36/94

China - 1 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

Pakistan - 29 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

China - 5 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 7 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

News Service 83/94

**AI INDEX: EUR 45/WU 01/94
25 APRIL 1994**

UK: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES QUASHING OF PAUL HILL'S CONVICTION

Amnesty International welcomes the decision of the Northern Ireland Court of Appeal to quash the conviction of Paul Hill for the murder of Brian Shaw in 1975. The organization sent a legal observer to the appeal hearing because it was concerned that the conviction was based solely on a contested confession.

Paul Hill was given a life sentence in 1975 by the Northern Ireland "Diplock Courts" (single judge, no jury) for the murder and intimidation of a former British soldier, Brian Shaw, who was killed in Belfast in 1974.

The only evidence against Paul Hill had been an uncorroborated confession which he claimed had been obtained through coercion. The appeal court found that his conviction had been "unsafe and unsatisfactory" because the court could not be sure beyond reasonable doubt that his confession had not been obtained after police ill-treatment in the cells at Guildford.

Paul Hill was arrested in 1974 in connection with pub bombings by the IRA in Guildford and Woolwich. During his interrogation for these bombings he was also interrogated about the murder of Brian Shaw. He alleged that prior to this latter interrogation he had been reduced to a mental wreck by verbal abuse, threats and physical assaults from English police officers.

He claimed that an officer had pointed a revolver at him through the flap of his cell door. Although the appeal court judges believed that the revolver incident had probably happened after Paul Hill made the confession, they stated that there were grounds for fearing that other incidents had taken place. They added that pointing a revolver at a prisoner was "a disgraceful and grossly improper action which clearly constituted inhuman treatment" and was sufficient to make the appeal successful.

Paul Hill had also been convicted in 1975, as one of the "Guildford Four", for the IRA pub bombings in Guildford and Woolwich. This conviction was quashed in 1989 by the Court of Appeal for England and Wales after new evidence emerged about police malpractice in connection with the confession statements.

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