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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 04/93

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on South Africa.

NEWS INITIATIVES

Bosnia-Herzegovina - 21 January

(New Information)

A 10-page document on rape in Bosnia, embargoed for 0900 hrs gmt, Thursday 21 January 1993, will be released at a press briefing in Geneva (details follow). Sections who have not already received this document should call the IS Press Office and we will fax it to you.

Please note that a second report about Bosnia-Herzegovina will be faxed and e-mailed to sections today. It follows the Research mission and focusses mainly on human rights violations in Bosanski Petrovac, where local Muslims have been subjected to arbitrary arrests and deliberate and arbitrary killings. It will be used in conjunction with the report on rape and sexual abuses by armed forces to be launched in Geneva on Thursday 21 Jan.

A news release covering issues in both reports, which will be used at the Geneva launch, will also be faxed/e-mailed to sections as soon as it is ready. Please remember we have asked you **NOT** to make any of the materials available to any media before the 0900 embargo. We know this causes problems for some media, but it is obviously important that we do not prevent coverage of our own membership action in Geneva. Thanks for your help - we can't afford an embargo break on this one.

We are sorry that the materials could not get to you sooner - when it appeared that the 2nd report could be ready in time, it was decided that the opportunity in Geneva on Thursday should be used to launch it.

The Swiss Section, in connection with the IS, is organizing a media event and press briefing at 0900 hrs gmt (10.00 am local time) at the following address: International Service for Human Rights, Service International pour les droits de l'homme, 1, rue de Varembe, 1211 Geneve, Rez-de-chaussée - as a conclusion to the letter-writing campaign for human rights in the Former Yugoslavia. We already have almost half a million letters from around the world, which will be used for a visual photo opportunity - which will attract TV. The IS has invited the international media, including agencies, radio and television - you are encouraged to invite any of your media who may be interested in attending.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Australia - *10 February*

(New Information)

Please note that the embargo has been confirmed for 0001 hrs gmt, Wednesday 10 February for the news release and document on Aboriginal deaths and ill-treatment in custody.

Japan - 10 March

A document and news release on refugee issues in Japan. We anticipate a high level of media interest in this news release.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Pakistan - 19 January

(New Information)

Weekly Update item enclosed to go with document, **Pakistan: Arrests and Torture of Political Activists**, AI Index: ASA 33/01/93. The document was posted to sections yesterday.

Chad - 29 January

An open letter is being planned to coincide with the National Conference in Chad. The IS will be sending it to specialist media, embargoed for 29 January.

Sri Lanka - EMBARGO DELAYED

(New Information)

Please note that the document about the Sri Lankan government's implementation of AI's recommendations has been delayed. There will be a weekly update to accompany it when it is ready. We will keep you posted of further developments. The IS Press Office plans to send it to selected media.

Racism and ill-treatment in Europe - 3 February

News release to go with Focus and campaign action on racist ill-treatment in Europe has been sent out. The IS Press Office sent the Focus article to section Press Officers last week as the February Newsletter has been delayed because of IS staff shortages.

2. AFR 53/WU 01/93
19 January 1993

SOUTH AFRICA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SENDS OBSERVER TO INQUEST INTO DEATH OF DETAINEE

An Amnesty International delegate arrived in South Africa on 14 January 1993 to attend an inquest into the death in police custody of Bethuel Maphumulo. However, the inquest was postponed until 15 February 1993.

Amnesty International's delegate is Professor Derrick Pounder, Head of the Department of Forensic Medicine at Dundee Royal Infirmary and Chair of the United Kingdom branch of Physicians for Human Rights. In 1991, he observed the inquest into the death of Donald Madisha in South African police custody on behalf of Amnesty International.

Amnesty International has been concerned for many years about the torture and ill-treatment in South African police custody of detainees, arrested both for political and other reasons. The situation grew worse in 1992 with a rising number of deaths in police custody under suspicious circumstances - some 120 during the year according to human rights organizations in South Africa.

Bethuel Maphumulo died while in the custody of the Soweto Murder and Robbery squad in December 1990. On legal advice he had voluntarily surrendered to police with the agreement that he would be brought to court within 48 hours and police would not oppose his bail application. When his lawyer arrived in court, he was informed that Bethuel Maphumulo had drowned in the police station swimming pool while attempting to escape. However, *post mortem* reports by both independent and State pathologists revealed that Bethuel Maphumulo had injuries consistent with strangulation and not drowning. Despite such findings, in direct conflict with the police version of events, the authorities have refused to take any action over the past two years against the police officers involved in Bethuel Maphumulo's death.

The inquest was apparently postponed because a senior State counsel was unwell. Professor Pounder was able to discuss Amnesty International's concerns about the case and related issues with lawyers and medical experts before leaving South Africa on 15 January. Two members of the International Secretariat are remaining in South Africa for the next 10 days to collect information about deaths in detention and other human rights issues.