

AI Index: NWS 11/50/93  
Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 1817

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**TO: PRESS OFFICERS**

**FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS**

**DATE: 21 MAY 1993**

**WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 50/93**

Contained in this weekly update are external items on East Timor (which is being sent out to international media for immediate release) and Morocco.

**PLEASE NOTE:**

A short document about the War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is being prepared. It will be AI Index: EUR 48/03/93 and is due to be sent out in the Weekly Mailing on 26 May.

**NEWS INITIATIVES**

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES**

**\*\*Egypt - 26 May\*\***

(New Information)

PLEASE NOTE: The Egypt Government has already issued a response to the document to go out on 26 May - it is very lengthy and needs to be translated, so the Research Team need some time to examine it and respond fully to it. However, a weekly update item is being prepared to go out to you today or Monday at the latest, with a comment on this response, to be used in conjunction with the document and news release on 26 May.

**UN World Conference - 2 June**

News release on UN World Conference to go with June Focus article and ENR.

**UN WORLD CONFERENCE-RELATED NEWS INITIATIVES ONLY THROUGHOUT JUNE**

**Annual Report - 8 July**

Annual Report publication, Worldwide Summary, Regional Summaries, Regional Updates, news release.

**Indonesia (Aceh) - 28 July**

Document and news release to go with action on massive numbers of political killings.

**TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES**

**\*\*Israel & OT - 27 May\*\***

(New Information)

The Israel Research Team got back from a mission to Gaza last week. A weekly update item reporting back on their findings is being prepared and will be sent out to you mid next week - sorry for the last-minute arrangement. The IS Press Office will send the item to international agencies.

**\*\*Azerbaijan - 28 May\*\***

(New Information)

Document on hostage-taking and weekly update item to go with section-level action. IS Press Office will send out to selected international media. The weekly update item will be sent out to you later today or Monday at the latest.

#### **World Conference: Video Material**

A video setting out our agenda for the World Conference is currently in production. It will be a development from the conventional ENR format and will be available in four languages. It will be distributed to sections and embargoed for 2 June.

Video compilation tapes are also in preparation for use at the time of the World Conference. One will include footage of human rights violations to illustrate the challenge to governments; another will focus on AI's own work. These tapes will be edited on 4 June and will be embargoed for 14 June.

#### **Section Initiatives**

##### **European World Conference Press Briefing in June - Please check with British Section for date**

The British Section Press Office has been talking to the EC project office and the Francophone Belgium Press Officer about holding a European press briefing in Brussels for MEPs and for journalists who will be covering the World Conference. The aim will be to look at the EC's role as a whole in terms of its internal shortcomings (Asylum issues, etc), external policies - aid/development, etc, and also to look at Europe's role within the UN.

Although the idea has been suggested by the British Section, it is hoped that all European Section Press Officers will be interested in being involved. For further information please contact either Daphne Davies, in the British Section Press Office or Johannes in the EC project office.

##### **"Caravan of Conscience" - 16 to 25 May**

The Irish Section's convoy of buses through Europe to the borders of Serbia and Croatia left Ireland on Sunday. You were sent a weekly update item on Friday 14 May - please contact the Irish Section for further information.

2. ASA 21/WU 02/93 EXTERNAL  
21 May 1993

EAST TIMOR: XANANA TRIAL A TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE

Xanana Gusmão, the East Timorese resistance leader, was sentenced to life-imprisonment today (21 May 1993) after a blatantly unfair trial. The District Court of Dili found him guilty of rebellion and illegal possession of firearms. Amnesty International deplored the outcome but said it came as no surprise since a guilty verdict is a foregone conclusion in political trials in Indonesia and East Timor.

In view of the fact that Indonesia's sovereignty over East Timor has not been recognized by the United Nations, the competence of Indonesian courts to try Xanana Gusmão, and other East Timorese, is open to question. It is especially doubtful whether an East Timorese can legitimately be charged with rebellion against the Government of Indonesia which occupies the territory illegally. Nevertheless, Amnesty International believes that, when such trials do take place, every effort must be made to ensure that they comply fully with international standards of fairness.

Following strong international criticism of its appalling human rights record in East Timor, the Indonesian Government made an unusual effort to make Xanana Gusmão's trial appear both open and fair. Selected foreign journalists, diplomats and some international human rights organizations - not including Amnesty International - were permitted to attend as observers. However, like all political trials in East Timor and Indonesia, this one failed to meet international standards of fairness, or even to comply with Indonesia's own Code of Criminal Procedure.

Even before proceedings began on 1 February, practices highly prejudicial to a fair trial were already evident. After his capture on 20 November 1992, Xanana Gusmão was held in secret military custody for 17 days before the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) representatives were permitted to see him. Apart from being unlawful, this prolonged period of incommunicado detention gave rise to fears that he may have been psychologically or physically ill-treated. Such fears were heightened by the fact that, in violation of both domestic and international standards, he was denied access to a lawyer while under interrogation. There were also doubts about whether he had been free to appoint legal counsel of his choice as required by Indonesian law. Lawyers from the Indonesian Legal Aid Institute (LBH) were not permitted to visit him, despite having been given power of attorney by his relatives. A defence lawyer was finally appointed on 26 January 1993 just six days before the trial began, but doubts remain over the circumstances of his appointment and about his motivation for accepting the case.

The trial itself was also marked by the violation of basic international and domestic standards. Prosecution witnesses, many of whom were themselves political detainees, appear to have been subjected to undue pressure from military authorities, making their testimony unreliable. Some who refused to comply were reportedly subjected to intimidation and sanctions. One witness, Saturnino da Costa Belo, who unexpectedly shouted "Long Live East Timor!" was hustled out of the court-room, placed in an isolation cell and declared unfit to testify. A legitimate fear of official reprisals also ensured that few witnesses could be found to testify for the defence. In some respects, the defence case also appeared to have been inadequately prepared. A further problem was that neither Xanana Gusmão nor many of the witnesses were fluent in Indonesian, the language used in the court, while translation services provided were neither complete nor accurate. Perhaps the most blatant contravention of fair trial standards came in one of the final sessions when Xanana Gusmão was due to read his final defence plea. After he had read two pages of a 29-page statement, the presiding judge ordered him to stop, claiming that his remarks were "irrelevant".

In addition to these procedural concerns, Amnesty International believes that the general political atmosphere within which the trial took place - one of undisguised official hostility to the defendant, and repeated interference in the judicial proceedings by military and executive authorities - made a fair trial virtually impossible.

The trial of Xanana Gusmão has justly attracted widespread international attention. But it is hardly unique. With this verdict, Xanana Gusmão joins thousands of political prisoners sentenced in blatantly unfair trials in East Timor and Indonesia since the New Order government of President Suharto came to power in the mid 1960s. Virtually unnoticed by the international community, similar political trials continue today in the province of Aceh, where government forces have conducted a brutal counter-insurgency campaign since 1989. And despite government claims that the human rights situation in East Timor has improved in the past year, serious violations continue to occur while past violations remain unresolved. Scores of East Timorese arrested for their non-violent pro-independence activities in the past two

**years remain in custody, some of them not yet charged, others serving sentences up to life imprisonment. Meanwhile, the fate of more than 200 people who "disappeared" after the Santa Cruz Massacre in November 1981 remains unresolved.**

3. MDE 29/WU 03/93 EXTERNAL  
21 May 1993

**INTERNAL**

Amnesty International has not been allowed to carry out research in Morocco since March 1990 when two staff members on a research visit were asked to leave the country. A recent Amnesty International report on Morocco, in April 1993, welcomed past releases by the Moroccan Government and called on the authorities to end the practice of "disappearances" in Morocco once and for all by releasing all those who remain detained in secret centres.

On 16 May, in an interview on French television, King Hassan admitted that abuses had been committed in Morocco, but stated that they were not as numerous as some had claimed. He described Amnesty International as an outdated organization, created by an embittered Irishman and taken over by leftist movements. He stated that "Amnesty is no longer respectable the moment it tells lies. I am ready to accept a trial if what I say is false. I accept the trial, my country accepts the trial, but it has to come and prove that there are hundreds of victims...Let it bring all the lawyers of the world. But if it transpires that it's been telling stories for years, then it must tell itself that one could ask it for sanctions".

**EXTERNAL**

**MOROCCO: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VISITS MOROCCO**

An Amnesty International delegation will be visiting Morocco to discuss Amnesty International's concerns in Morocco with the *Conseil consultatif des droits de l'homme* (CCDH), Human Rights Advisory Council, on 21 and 22 May.

Amnesty International was invited to Morocco by the CCDH after King Hassan in his speech marking the *Fête du trône* (celebrations for the anniversary of the King's accession) on 2 March announced that Morocco was resuming dialogue with Amnesty International.

Amnesty International welcomes the opportunity to discuss its concerns in Morocco, including the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, torture, unfair trials and "disappearances", with the CCDH. The organization hopes that the talks with the CCDH will mark a new period of positive dialogue and mutual understanding.