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Amnesty International

International Secretariat

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 5 AUGUST 1992

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 31/92

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Yugoslavia.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Uganda - 9 September

A report, news release and FOB (fold out brochure) to go with a campaign focusing on extrajudicial executions, detention and torture.

Indigenous Peoples' Campaign - 7 October

ENR

There will be an Electronic News Release video to go with the Indigenous Peoples' Campaign. If you would like a copy, please contact Anne Jenkins in the Audio-visual Department at the IS (Tel: 071 413 5585) by 24 August.

Discussions are currently under way at the IS about the media strategy for the report. We are currently considering media materials, speakers, how to present the material, etc. As this is the first time we have done a report like this, we would like your input and think there should be an opportunity to discuss problems in advance. If you are interested in a telephone conference call, please let us know.

Myanmar - 28 October

A report and news release on Myanmar, to go with a campaign to coincide with the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Targeted and Limited News Releases

Haiti - 26 August

The embargo date of this targeted news release is now confirmed at 26 August. The document is about human rights violations since the coup last September.

Malawi - 3 September

Targeted news release to go with a document on human rights violations in Malawi this year.

Children/AI week - 21 October

A targeted news release on children to go with a Focus article in October.

2. EUR 48/WU 06/92 EXTERNAL

5 August 1992

INTERNAL

Please see weekly update services 24 and 30 for more information.

EXTERNAL

YUGOSLAVIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SEEKS INFORMATION CONCERNING ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES

Amnesty International is concerned about numerous reports that people from all groups engaged in the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina are being held in camps where allegedly many have been ill-treated and some have even been killed. The organization is seeking to clarify these reports and to obtain specific information about the camps and in particular the alleged torture, ill-treatment and killings. An Amnesty International delegate is in the region collecting information from refugees and others relating to human rights abuses by all sides.

In June, Amnesty International urged all sides in the conflict to uphold international humanitarian standards and to protect human rights.

Amnesty International delegates arrived in Belgrade on 28 July to observe the trial of Zdenko Novak, Franjo Brodjanac and Zoran Cako. It was postponed, but the delegates were able to discuss the case with lawyers and officials and to obtain information about other Amnesty International concerns.

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ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 31/92

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Yugoslavia.

1. EUR 48/WU 07/92 EXTERNAL

7 August 1992

INTERNAL

This weekly update should be brought to the attention of press officers, campaign coordinators and others in your section involved in our concerns in the former Yugoslavia.

The following external information is the latest information sent to us from our researcher who is currently in Belgrade. Although we are now in a position to say we believe thousands of people are held in detention camps in Bosnia-Herzegovina and that we have received allegations of torture and killings, we are seeking confirmation of reports of those human rights abuses and are not able to substantiate those allegations at this time. We would therefore ask sections to use the following external information on a "For Response" basis. You may send the external portion to journalists or others who ask for our latest information on Bosnia, but we would ask that you not issue news releases or other high profile material based on this weekly update at this time.

As mentioned earlier, the researcher on the former Yugoslavia is currently carrying out research in the field. With the announcement today by a Serbian authority that international organizations will be allowed into the detention camps, we are exploring the possibility of sending a research mission to Bosnia as soon as possible. We will keep sections informed of any developments in this area.

There is also a possibility of the UN Commission on Human Rights holding an extraordinary meeting next week to discuss the situation in Bosnia. If such a meeting is held, and if there is an opportunity for NGO involvement, we would submit a statement to the commission. Again, we will keep sections informed of any action at the UN.

EXTERNAL

YUGOSLAVIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED ABOUT REPORTS OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN
BOSNIA-HERCEGOVINA

Amnesty International is concerned about reports of large scale human rights abuses taking place in Bosnia-Herzegovina, including allegations of torture, ill-treatment and killing of detainees. While it is impossible to confirm many of the reported locations being used for detention, the organization believes that at least 2,000 prisoners are being held in Manjača under Serbian control. Other detention centres which are controlled by Serbs include Bileća, Omarska and Kula. Bosnian Croatian forces are reported to control detention centres in Zenica, Mostar and Čapljina among other places. The organization is informed that a railway tunnel has been used by forces under the command of Bosnian President Izetbegović to hold civilians at Bradina south of Sarajevo, but reportedly these detainees have been released. Amnesty International believes that small-scale detentions are also taking place at many locations throughout the territory. It has also received allegations that some people are being detained by various small paramilitary groups and it is concerned about the lack of control able to be exercised over the treatment of these detainees.

Amnesty International is also concerned about reports that in some cases those detained are being held as hostages to be exchanged for detainees of the other side.

Detailed information is not available about all places of detention but where known, hygiene, medical facilities and nutrition of detainees appear to be inadequate, in some cases seriously. Amnesty International is concerned that such conditions have resulted in cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment of the detainees.

Amnesty International calls for the release of all civilians held by all sides solely for reason of their ethnic origin, noting that those held include many children and old people. However, the organization believes that international bodies should be involved in coordinating and monitoring the release of detainees to ensure that, upon release, those who wish to return home are given safe conduct there, or, if they are unwilling to return home out of fear for their safety, to an appropriate place of refuge.

The organization calls again on all sides in the conflict to uphold international humanitarian standards and to protect human rights. Noting that the ICRC has been denied access to many places of detention in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Amnesty International also urgently calls upon all sides to identify all facilities being used for detention under their control or that of any paramilitary forces owing allegiance to them. All such locations should be declared immediately and be made available for inspection by international bodies including the ICRC.