

MEDIA ADVISORY

AFR 49/06/96

SENEGAL

Amnesty International delegation to visit Senegal

An Amnesty International delegation, led by Michel Frenette, head of the Canadian Section (French speaking branch) and consisting of Mme Evelyne Hohoueto, a Togolese magistrate, and two Amnesty International researchers, Gaëtan Mootoo and Salvatore Saguès, will be in Senegal from 15 to 31 January to meet the Senegalese authorities and discuss the human rights situation in the country.

Since the publication in February 1996 of an Amnesty International report entitled *Senegal: Widespread use of torture persists with impunity, while human rights abuses also continue in Casamance*, the Senegalese Government has announced several positive measures. These include the establishment of a human rights office, the passing of a law making torture, as defined by the Penal Code, a specific criminal offence, and the release last December of 56 Casamance civilians held without trial in Dakar since April 1995.

While welcoming these positive steps, Amnesty International would like to raise with the Senegalese authorities the case of the continued detention without trial of more than 120 Casamance civilians, and also the problem of impunity with respect to the armed forces, who committed serious human rights violations in Casamance in 1995.

Amnesty International's last visit took place in 1993. On that occasion, the delegates discussed human rights violations in Casamance with senior members of the judiciary as well as with security officials.

This year's mission has plans for meetings with H.E. M. Abdou Diouf, the Senegalese Head of State, and with the Prime Minister and the Ministers of the Interior, Justice and the Armed Forces.

The delegation also hopes to visit Casamance and meet Father Diamacoune, Secretary General of the MFDC, in order to raise with him the serious abuses committed by the movement's armed branch.

A press conference will be held on 31 January 1997 at the Hôtel Tabara in Dakar at the end of the mission.

For further information, please contact Maimouna Diagne at the Senegalese Section of Amnesty International (Tel.: 00 221 25 66 53).