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£SRI LANKA

@Recent changes to emergency regulations - an update

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Several amendments were made to Sri Lanka's Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers) Regulations on 3 February 1993, several of which affected arrest, detention and inquest procedures.¹ Since then, the regulation regarding the issue of certificates of arrest during cordon and search operations (ER 18(9)) has been further amended to require that the arresting officer must issue a certificate of arrest during cordon and search operations as a matter of routine.

Amnesty International had recommended that such a procedure be introduced in September 1991.² This recommendation was one of 32 recommendations for human rights safeguards which the organization made at that time, 30 of which the Government of Sri Lanka announced that it would implement. Although an order requiring that certificates of arrest must be given during cordon and search operations had been issued from Army Headquarters on 1 July 1992, the procedure had not been implemented in practice by the time Amnesty International delegates visited eastern Sri Lanka in November 1992.³

When the Emergency Regulations were amended on 3 February 1993, the regulation referring to the issue of certificates of arrest only required that they be issued "if a request is so made". This limitation would have made the procedure meaningless, as it can only serve a protective function if enforced as a matter of routine.

Amnesty International welcomes the fact that the Emergency Regulations now require certificates of arrest to be issued during cordon and search operations, and continues to urge the

¹ See *Sri Lanka: Recent changes to Emergency Regulations*, AI Index 37/03/93, February 1993.

² See *Sri Lanka - The Northeast: Human rights violations in a context of armed conflict*, p.42, AI Index: ASA 37/14/91, September 1991.

³ See *Sri Lanka: An assessment of the human rights situation*, AI Index: ASA 37/01/93, February 1993.

Government of Sri Lanka to implement fully its recommendations for the protection of prisoners, for the prevention of extrajudicial executions and for the thorough investigation of human rights violations.

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