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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 03/93

Contained in this weekly update are external items on India and Pakistan.

NEWS INITIATIVES

Bosnia-Herzegovina - 21 January

(New Information)

A 10-page document on rape in Bosnia will be embargoed for 0900 hrs gmt, Thursday 21 January 1993 and will be released at a press briefing in Geneva (details follow). The IS Press Office posted the document to all section Press Officers yesterday.

Thanks for your response about the conference call - Richard Bunting is setting the call up and will give the relevant people details later this week. The call will probably be on Monday 18 Jan, when most of you should have received the document.

The Swiss Section, in connection with the IS, is organizing a media event and press briefing at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva - as a conclusion to the letter-writing campaign for human rights in the Former Yugoslavia. We already have over 250,000 letters from around the world, which will be used for a visual photo opportunity - which should attract TV. The IS will be inviting the international media, including agencies, radio and television - you are encouraged to invite any of your media who may be interested in attending.

We will be sending you more details as they are finalized - in the meantime, please contact Daniel Bolomey at the Swiss Section if you have any queries.

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

Brazil - 1600 hrs gmt 15 January 1993

Please note the human rights concert which was planned for 17 January has unfortunately been cancelled. The report will still be launched in Brazil as planned (details follow), but the text of the weekly update item index: AMR 19/WU 02/92, sent in Weekly Update NWS 11/51/92, needs to be changed:

Remove the last sentence on page 2 of the text (referring to the concert), so that the item ends: "curb human rights violations in the region."

Please note that the embargo has been confirmed for 1600 hrs gmt, 15 January 1993. The above-mentioned weekly update item is to accompany a document about human rights violations against indigenous peoples in Brazil, which was sent to you in the first weekly mailing of 1993. A spokesperson from the IS is in Brazil to deal with media there, and the IS will be sending the weekly update item to international media. Full details are available from the IS Press Office.

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. The embargo has been confirmed for 3 February 1993. The IS Press Office will send the Focus article to section Press Officers next week as the February Newsletter has been delayed because of IS staff shortages.

2. ASA 20/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL
12 January 1993

INDIA: VIOLENCE FOLLOWING DESTRUCTION OF BABRI MASJID AT AYODHYA

Amnesty International is concerned by the reported killings of at least 137 people by security forces in Bombay and the arrests of thousands of people in India following the violence which erupted after the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya on 6 December.

The organization is concerned by the arbitrary actions reportedly taken by security force members when carrying out official orders to suppress violent mobs and to arrest members of five organizations which were banned in early December.

Police in Bombay reportedly fired indiscriminately on demonstrators and others in the week of 7 December. Out of 202 people officially reported to have died, at least 137 were shot dead by the police - the majority of whom belonged to the Muslim community. Eyewitnesses have reportedly described how the police sided on several occasions with Hindu mobs attacking Muslims and how most of the victims of police shootings bore wounds in the head and chest, rather than on the lower parts of the body. This suggests that the police had shot to kill rather than resorting to non-lethal methods of crowd control, such as using teargas, rubber bullets or aiming to shoot to injure. Reports also suggest that some people, who did not participate in these demonstrations, were shot dead in their homes by paramilitary forces.

Maharashtra's Chief Minister has ordered an inquiry into the allegations. Amnesty International has urged that the inquiry should be conducted by an independent and impartial body and requested to be informed of its outcome and about any action taken against those found responsible for having carried out indiscriminate or unlawful killings.

The organization is also concerned about thousands of people who are reported to have been arbitrarily arrested in India following the dismissal of all state governments ruled by the Bharatiya Janata Party and the banning of five organizations, four of them Hindu Nationalist groups, in early December.

Amnesty International fears that the wide powers to arrest members of banned organizations may be abused to settle personal scores and to arrest people who are entirely innocent of inciting violence between the two communities.

A leader of one of the banned parties, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), was arrested for what a police report apparently described as "talking to two-three people, inciting them by alleging that the ban on (the) RSS was an illegal and wrongful act". This report indicates that he was arrested solely for peacefully expressing his views about the government's decision to ban his organization. Amnesty International has urged that he, and others detained on similar grounds are released. In another case police were reported to have arrested the young son of a member of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad organization when they could not find his father.

Amnesty International has urged the government to take steps to ensure that people are not arrested solely for the peaceful expression of their views and unless there is evidence that the person concerned has committed an internationally recognizable crime. The organization also urged the government to ensure that all those arrested are brought before a magistrate within 24 hours of arrest and that a mechanism is established to promptly review the evidence against each detainee arrested since 6 December - to ensure that no one is detained merely for peacefully expressing non-violent political views.

Amnesty International has requested details about the measures the government may be taking to review the composition and improve the training of the Bombay police to remove any impression that the force acts with the impartiality required in such situations. In particular, Amnesty International has asked to be informed whether the composition of the force will be reviewed in order to reflect the composition of the society in which it functions, including the minority Muslim community.

The organization recognizes the government's determination to take firm action to prevent further violence in this difficult situation, but is totally opposed to unlawful killings and arbitrary arrests by the security forces.

**3. ASA 33/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL
EMBARGOED FOR 19 JANUARY 1993**

INTERNAL

Please note that this item is embargoed for 19 January and is to go with a new report (see news initiatives). The IS will fax it to selected media.

EXTERNAL

PAKISTAN: ARRESTS AND TORTURE OF POLITICAL ACTIVISTS AND JOURNALISTS

Amnesty International is concerned that at least 12 journalists covering demonstrations by the Pakistan Democratic Alliance, and scores of leading government opponents taking part in these demonstrations have been tortured or ill-treated by police in Pakistan.

The organization received these reports following mass arrests of thousands of political activists between 17 November and the end of December 1992.

Mariana Baabar of "The News" was reportedly beaten and verbally assaulted during her brief detention in police custody in Islamabad. Salman Taseer, a leading member of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) was moved to four different police stations in Lahore after his arrest the same day. He was reportedly hung upside down as a result of which he passed out several times. In a petition to the Lahore High Court he said: "Two plain clothes policemen sat on the (iron) bar and rolled the bar over my legs crushing the tissues. The soles of my feet were beaten by rubber truncheons and batons till they swelled like balloons".

Another PPP leader, Sohail Malik, was reportedly beaten in a police station in Islamabad after his arrest on 22 December during a peaceful demonstration. Police wearing boots reportedly kicked him in the testicles, beat him repeatedly with electric batons and jumped on him.

Amnesty International is further concerned that several hundred prisoners of conscience may have been among thousands of political activists who were detained during the recent mass arrests in Pakistan. Most detainees were released within hours or days. Others were either served with preventive detention orders or charged with sedition, and were to be tried in special courts whose procedures do not conform to international fair trial standards.

Twelve members of a local human rights group, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, who were monitoring human rights violations by the police during an opposition demonstration were arrested on 18 November and held in an Islamabad police station for 30 hours. They were released after the intervention of foreign journalists and diplomats.

Mass arrests of government opponents have occurred in Pakistan since the government of Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif assumed office in November 1990. These took place in December 1990; in January, June, August and November 1991; and in May, November and December 1992. All these mass arrests have involved the detention of hundreds of prisoners of conscience and torture of dozens of detainees.

*** An Amnesty International report, PAKISTAN: Arrests and torture of political activists, AI Index: ASA 33/01/93, was released today.**