
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 26/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - ALGERIA

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

UK - 9 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

Kuwait - 24 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 170

****Women - 8 March**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

The UN Commission on Human Rights will be debating and voting on appointing the position of Special Rapporteur for violence against women. The UN decision will probably be announced on about 4 March. To make the news release on women up-to-date, it would be good to use this for a lead, however, obviously this would make the news release very last minute. Please let me know ASAP if it suits you to receive an A copy of the Women news release next week, followed by a B copy sent at the last minute with an appropriate lead. Paula. Tel: +44 71 413 5564/e-mail: pseager.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

European Parliament & Political killings/"disapps" Handbook - 23 Feb

SEE NEWS SERVICE 22/94

****Turkey - 10 March**** News Service item planned on protection of refugees in Turkey.

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Saudi Arabia - 31 March more details to follow

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

South Africa - 23 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 05/94

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ALGERIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON NEW HEAD OF STATE TO RESTORE RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Two years after the state of emergency was imposed in Algeria, Amnesty International has written to Lamine Zeroual, the new Head of State, asking him to ensure that the new government will take clear, determined and immediate steps to bring an end to human rights violations in Algeria.

Since the state of emergency was declared in Algeria on 9 February 1992, the rule of law as laid down by international standards has been increasingly disregarded, whilst a rising tide of political violence has claimed at least 3,000 lives. Amnesty International has, over the past two years, repeatedly raised serious concerns about the escalation of human rights violations in Algeria. Extrajudicial executions, torture, unfair trials of political detainees and administrative detention have become increasingly widespread, as has escalating violence and human rights abuses by armed opposition groups.

In its letter, Amnesty International welcomed positive measures taken recently by the Algerian authorities, including the suspension of judicial executions and the release of a number of suspected political opponents held in administrative detention, without charge or trial, in camps in the Sahara. The organization recognizes the seriousness of the situation faced by the Algerian Government and has repeatedly condemned grave human rights abuses by armed opposition groups, including the deliberate and arbitrary killing of civilians - calling on these groups to cease such abuses.

"No level of violence committed by opposition groups, however serious, can ever justify human rights violations by governments", said Amnesty International. Widespread and flagrant abuses of basic human rights - such as the right to life, the right not to be tortured, and the right to a fair trial - are increasingly perpetrated by members of the security forces and perpetuated by the judiciary. The failure of the Algerian authorities to take the necessary measures to bring an end to such violations suggests that these are condoned, even encouraged, by the government.

Amnesty International called on the new Algerian President to ensure that the restoration of respect for human rights would be considered as an urgent priority for his new government.

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