

AI Index: NWS 11/28/92

Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 1959

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Amnesty International

International Secretariat

1 Easton Street

London WC1X 8DJ

United Kingdom

TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 15 JULY 1992

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 28/92

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Malawi and Anette Fischer's obituary.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

We were all saddened to hear of the sudden death of Anette Fischer, Chairperson of the IEC, last weekend. She will be sorely missed.

You will have all been sent a brief WU item, a request from the Danish Section and biographical details of Anette Fischer, and in this WU there is an obituary which you may use as you wish. The IS also has a number of personal tributes, in English, from representatives of the Danish Section and the group of which Anette was a member. If you wish to see these or make use of them, please contact the IS press office.

Good News Video - Correction

(New Information)

Please note that in the script of the Good News Compilation 1991-1992, which was distributed recently together with the 1992 Annual Report Electronic News Release, the first two lines of the second paragraph of statement 7 (Ibrahim Serfaty) should read: "Personally, the first letter came to me from a group in western Austria" (ie. not "Western Australia").

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Syria - 22 July

Our first major report on Syria in some time will be released on 22 July. We consider this to be an extremely important document, because it makes clear that despite recent amnesties in Syria hundreds of political prisoners are still held in the country. We've discussed the publicity strategy with the research team, who say that high level international publicity is a key goal of releasing the report, and we would ask press officers to do as much work on this as possible.

There have recently been reports of new trials in Syria. So far we have no firm information of any trials actually taking place, but we do refer to the subject in the news release.

Indigenous People's Campaign - 7 October

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

(New Information)

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

Uganda - 9 September

(New Information)

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

Unconfirmed News Releases

Haiti

A document is currently being prepared about human rights violations since the coup. We expect it will have an embargo date in late August.

2. AFR 36/WU 06/92 EXTERNAL

15 July 1992

MALAWI: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL FEARS FOR SAFETY OF TRADE UNION LEADER

Amnesty International has expressed grave fears for the safety of Chakufwa Chihana, a prominent Malawian trade union official released on the order of the High Court on 11 July 1992 but rearrested on 14 July.

On 11 July 1992 the government complied with an order of the High Court in Lilongwe to release Chakufwa Chihana on bail. He had been arrested on 6 April 1992 on his return from a meeting of the pro-multi-party movement in neighbouring Zambia. He was held in leg-irons for a month during his detention. Before last week the government had failed to comply with repeated rulings by a judge that Chakufwa Chihana should be produced in court. On 13 July Chakufwa Chihana was formally charged on three counts of possessing and importing seditious material - including a pastoral letter issued by the country's Roman Catholic bishops in March. These offences carry a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment. Amnesty International is calling for these charges to be dropped, since they arise solely from Chakufwa Chihana's non-violent political activity.

One of the conditions of Chakufwa Chihana's bail was that he reported every week to the police. He reported to Lilongwe police station at 2.30 pm on 14 July accompanied by his wife, who was told to wait outside. Twenty minutes later a police official told Mrs Chihana to go home. He said that Chakufwa Chihana was being taken to Zomba. However, police in Zomba later claimed no knowledge of his whereabouts. He has not been seen since.

Amnesty International has grave fears for Chakufwa Chihana's safety. Life-President Dr H. Kamuzu Banda threatened recently that returning exiled politicians would be "meat for crocodiles" and a number of political killings by the Malawian security forces have been documented. In the present climate of rising support for political change, elements of the security forces appear to be organizing semi-official paramilitary groups and there are fears that these may resort to extrajudicial executions.

Nine long-term political detainees were released last week. Amnesty International welcomed their release, but is appealing to the government to release scores of people detained without charge in recent weeks on suspicion of circulating pro-multi-party literature.

Among those released was Aleke Banda, a former secretary general of the ruling Malawi Congress Party who had been detained without charge for more than 12 years. He was arrested in 1980 after he had written a letter in his capacity as managing director of the parastatal company Press Holdings criticizing the payment of "unsecured loans" to Life-President Dr H. Kamuzu Banda, the company's chairman.

The other detainees released included prisoner of conscience Tukulani Sikweya Banda, held without charge since 1979 because of a family relationship to a prominent exiled opponent of the government. Tukulani Sikweya Banda's son was born after his arrest 13 years ago; the two only met for the first time in 1991. Among the others released are Owen Jumo and James Nkwanda, detained since 1979 and 1972 respectively. Their cases were being investigated by Amnesty International.

Amnesty International has details of the cases of dozens of people still held who have been arrested since April 1992 on suspicion of possessing or circulating literature criticizing the government's human rights record or calling for a change to the existing one-party political system, including the bishops' pastoral letter. The true figure for those detained probably runs into hundreds. They are held in extremely overcrowded conditions at Chichiri Prison, Maula Prison in Blantyre and Zomba Central Prison.

Many of those detained appear to have been arrested because they had access to photocopiers, faxes and other office machines which are suspected of having been used to circulate critical literature. A number of those held work for companies such as Olivetti and Business Machines. The entire computer section at the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi (ESCOM) in Malawi was arrested between 20 and 27

May. They included one woman, Gloria Gadama, arrested with her small baby. The acting manager of the computer section, Grey Nyenje, is feared to have been tortured. According to some reports he may have died in custody.

At least 20 employees of the National Bank of Malawi in Blantyre were arrested in late May after a short strike in support of a pay claim. They too are alleged to have had copies of pro-multi-party leaflets. Among the employees of the Old Mutual insurance company arrested in early June was Gerald Banda, son of Margaret Marango Banda, a former broadcaster detained without charge between 1988 and 1991 and adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

Two elders of the Presbyterian Church in Mzuzu have been detained without charge at Mzuzu Prison since April 1992. Gift Kaunda and Jairos Beza were arrested after the former had preached a sermon which the authorities apparently considered subversive. Gift Kaunda is suffering from malaria and appears not to be receiving adequate medical attention.

3. ORG 70/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL

15 July 1992

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SADDENED BY DEATH OF ANETTE FISCHER

Amnesty International's worldwide membership has been saddened by the death on 11 July of Anette Fischer, the Chairperson of Amnesty International's International Executive Committee. She and her husband Carl Eli were killed in a car crash in Florence, Italy, as they were returning home to Denmark from a holiday.

As chairperson of the International Executive Committee, Anette Fischer played a key role in the worldwide Amnesty International movement. The committee is composed of elected volunteers and oversees the work of Amnesty International between the movement's biennial International Council Meetings. Anette Fischer's task was to steer this body on a careful course balancing the demands of a vigorous voluntary movement with the realities confronted daily by the professional staff.

She brought ideal qualities to this role, having for the past 20 years devoted much of her time, energies, knowledge and skills as a volunteer with Amnesty International for the protection of human rights.

Anette Fischer was born Anette Klausen in Copenhagen, Denmark, on 13 July 1946. She lectured at the Royal Danish School of Librarianship in the early 1970s and became reference librarian in the large municipal library of Rodovre in 1975. She was married in 1972 to Carl Eli Fischer. They had no children.

Anette Fischer joined the Danish section of Amnesty International as a volunteer in 1969. From 1983 to 1989 she was a member of the board of the Danish section, and its Chairperson from 1986 to 1989. Her section frequently chose her as a delegate to the movement's governing International Council. In 1989 the Council elected her to the International Executive Committee and in 1991 she was elected Chairperson of the Committee.

The Amnesty International movement will miss Anette Fischer not only because of the leading role she played, but also because of the person she was, a very private individual who by her personal dedication and example inspired Amnesty International members from the many different cultures which make up the movement.

All too often her work took her into a world of suffering and pain. She was intensely aware of the personal tragedies which follow torture, cruel punishments, political killings, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances". She knew of the often indiscriminate actions of those who violated human rights and the resultant anguish of men, women and children.

Inspired by what she saw as the powerlessness of the oppressed, Anette Fischer devoted much of her time to promoting preventative measures to counter violations. She believed it was not enough to react to human rights violations - they had to be prevented.

In this goal of prevention, Anette Fischer was a driving force behind Amnesty International's efforts to promote human rights education. She played key roles in furthering human rights education programs in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and the Caribbean. She was instrumental in decisions to locate Regional Human Rights Resource Centres in Bangkok and Costa Rica.

Colleagues at Amnesty International's Danish section and in the voluntary group she attended for over 20 years are all grieving at her sudden death. Henrik Brade Johansen, director of the section from 1984 to 1992, paid tribute to her deep-rooted commitment, open-mindedness, fairness and respect for others. "These talents are rare in a movement with thousands of strong-minded individualists," he said. "She was a modest person, her friends' best friend and as considerate as one can be. It is a pleasure to have worked with her and to have become her and Carl Eli's friend. Their deaths are a severe blow to Amnesty International."

"The Amnesty International movement has lost a dedicated campaigner against human rights violations," said Ross Daniels, Vice-Chairperson of the International Executive Committee. "Anette Fischer was not just a member of Amnesty International: she was a colleague, a co-worker and fellow activist in the cause of universal human rights seeking a better world for the oppressed and dispossessed. She was a delightful companion and a treasured friend."

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ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 28/92

Contained in this addition to the weekly update are external items on Perez de Cuellar, Turkey and Burundi.

1. SECTION INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 9 July

The Annual Report seems to have been a big media success and we'd like to confirm this by gathering all the international press clippings that we can - particularly in the light of the changed embargo time.

If you have not already done so, please would you send copies of your national media coverage to the IS Press Office.

Syria Q&A - correction

(New Information)

Please note that the AI Index of the Syria questions and answers should be "MDE 24/20/92".

Spanish Section - news release

The Spanish Section is planning a news release on 22 July 1992, to coincide with a summit meeting in Madrid of Latin American heads of state.

The Section will also be sending the Annual Report and other relevant recent information on each country taking part in the summit to their embassy in Spain.

The news release will be embargoed for 0001 hrs on Wednesday 22 July, the day before the start of the summit, which is also the embargo date of the Syria international news release.

For more information on the news release or the section action, please contact the Spanish press officer, César Diaz. The IS Press Office has a copy of the text in Spanish.

2. ASA 17/WU 04/92 INTERNAL FOR RESPONSE

17 July 1992

Reuters and other agencies have been carrying reports of a speech given by Javier Perez de Cuellar, former Secretary General of the United Nations. According to the press stories, in the speech Perez de Cuellar suggested that reports of human rights violations in China have been exaggerated, in particular reports of the Tiananmen Square crackdown in June 1989.

Some newspapers have been running the story and quoting Amnesty International reports alongside quotes from Perez de Cuellar. The following brief weekly update item may be used by press officers as a basis for letters to the editors of any newspapers which carry the story in this way. We are not actively seeking publicity for this issue, and would ask you to respond only to stories where Amnesty International is mentioned in connection with the speech.

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INTERNAL FOR RESPONSE ONLY

CHINA: AI CONFIRMS SCALE OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AFTER PEREZ DE CUELLAR CASTS DOUBT

Following the massacre of peaceful protestors in Beijing in June 1989, Amnesty International published successive reports in which the organization concluded that troops in Beijing had opened fire both at random and deliberately at crowds, without warning. Those killed by troops included people running away from the firing, people in residential buildings and people crushed by military vehicles. Many of these killings were extra-judicial executions. The atmosphere of terror which followed the military crackdown made it impossible to gather accurate information about the death toll. However, the Chinese government's claim that only 200 civilians died appears to be a gross underestimate.

Amnesty International bases its information on a variety of sources including official and unofficial sources in China. It has repeatedly submitted its information to the Chinese government. In the three years since the massacre in Beijing, the Chinese government failed to account satisfactorily for the fate of hundreds of detainees or to respond to detailed reports alleging that many of those detained since 1989 have been tortured and ill-treated.

Three years after the suppression of peaceful pro-democracy protests which resulted in the massacre of hundreds of civilians, human rights violations continue to be widespread in China. Thousands of political prisoners, including hundreds of prisoners of conscience remain in detention. Unfair trial, torture, long-term detention without charge or trial and summary executions continue. There has been no attempt to introduce fundamental safeguards to prevent human rights violations, such as the use of torture to extract confessions, from occurring.

Some prisoners of conscience have been sentenced since 1989 to life imprisonment following trials which fell far short of international standards for fairness. Others have been detained under administrative procedures not supervised by independent judicial bodies. Many political detainees who have been released in the past two years have been subjected to severe restrictions on their basic civil, economic and political rights.

3. EUR 44/WU 05/92 EXTERNAL

17 July 1992

TURKEY: GOVERNMENT PROMISES ON HUMAN RIGHTS REFORM REMAIN UNFULFILLED

Amnesty International is concerned that despite promises of reform, no concrete measures have been taken by the Turkish Government to stop continuing human rights violations in Turkey.

On 1 July, the Turkish Foreign Minister claimed that the government "had taken radical measures and steps on human rights." However, not a single piece of the long-overdue and long-promised human rights legislation has been enacted. As the first parliamentary session of the new Turkish Government drew to a close this week, with the single exception of the closure of the special isolation prison in Eski\_ehir in November, no practical or significant executive measures had been taken in the human rights field.

An unsatisfactory draft reform package, which did not meet international standards and was blocked by the President and returned to Parliament in June, will now have to wait for further debate in September. It has been further diluted, now carrying a reservation so that for two years some slight improvements, such as shortened detention and theoretical right of access to lawyers, will not apply to those detainees suspected of political offences or to those in the mainly Kurdish southeast - those detainees at most serious risk of torture.

Meanwhile, torture and deaths in custody continue unabated, and detainees in all parts of the country remain unprotected by even the most rudimentary safeguards against torture. In a statement which appeared in the British newspaper The Guardian, published on 23 June 1992, Ünal Erkan, the Governor of the Emergency Powers Region, stated that the allegations of torture raised by Amnesty International were made "by terrorists, not by housewives, butchers and bakers".

Just five days later, a laboratory assistant, \_smail Y\_ Imaz, was accused by a neighbour of sexual assault and detained by police in Istanbul. According to his own account, fully corroborated by detailed medical reports and photographs of his extensive injuries, he was interrogated under torture six times over two days, during which time he was severely beaten on the hand and buttocks, subjected to electric shocks through the penis, and exposed to attack by trained police dogs.

In addition to its long-standing concern on the question of torture, Amnesty International has noted a new development in Turkey during the past 12 months - a dramatic increase in allegations of extrajudicial execution. The new government has consistently failed to respond to Amnesty International's repeated appeals that commissions of inquiry be established to examine these allegations, as recommended by the United Nations Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions.

Contrary to the complacent view voiced by Mehmet Karaman, the Minister of State responsible for human rights, that "it would be impossible for any organ of government to kill any suspect in its hands", Amnesty International continues to receive well-founded allegations of extrajudicial execution from all parts of the country, but in particular from the mainly Kurdish southeast where a state of emergency is in force.

Like many targets of alleged extrajudicial executions, S\_dd\_k Tan was a member of the Turkish Human Rights Association and of the People's Labour Party, and had relatives believed by the authorities to be members of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), fighting a guerrilla war for an independent Kurdish State. He was shot dead on 20 June 1992 in a neighbour's house in Batman by a group of assailants. He had previously lost the sight of one eye during a bomb attack on his car in June 1991. In December of that year his son R\_za had been detained and had later reported that he was tortured in Bitlis Police Headquarters before being taken outside the town and shot, as a result of which he was severely wounded in the legs.

4. AFR 16/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL

17 July 1992

BURUNDI: FIVE SENTENCED TO DEATH AND 73 SENTENCED TO PRISON TERMS AFTER UNFAIR TRIALS

Amnesty International is concerned that five people have been sentenced to death and 73 others to prison terms ranging from a few years to life imprisonment in Burundi after unfair trials.

Those convicted were among about 500 members of the majority Hutu ethnic group who were detained in connection with the activities of the *Parti pour la libération du peuple hutu* (PALIPEHUTU), Party for the Liberation of the Hutu People. The first trial of PALIPEHUTU supporters occurred in April 1992. A second occurred on 6 July and a third involving 64 people concluded on 15 July. The authorities have accused PALIPEHUTU of responsibility for a series of violent attacks in Burundi at the end of 1991 and again in April 1992 and of trying to overthrow the government, whose security forces largely comprise members of the Tutsi minority.

Amnesty International is urging that all political trials should be conducted in accordance with international standards for fair trial. The organization said the trials which started in April 1992 were unfair in many respects. Most of those tried were reportedly subjected to beatings and other ill-treatment by members of the security forces at the time of their arrest and during interrogation - yet the courts are not known to have ordered any investigation into reports that the defendants were tortured or ill-treated; statements extracted from defendants under duress may have been used as evidence to convict them; and none of those tried had legal representation or were given an adequate opportunity to defend themselves against the charges.

The first trial started unannounced in April 1992, and involved eight people arrested at the end of July 1991, four months before violence broke out in the country. In early June 1992, six of them were convicted of disturbing public order, subversion and collusion with insurgents and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. One other received a two-year sentence and the eighth defendant was acquitted.

On 6 July 12 more people were tried, all accused of involvement in the violence which shook the capital, Bujumbura, and northwestern Burundi at the end of November 1991. Again, none of the accused had any legal counsel. The trial lasted only three hours, with a senior Procuracy official reportedly remarking that the trial's brevity was due to the defendants being "evidently guilty" (*évidemment coupables*). All 12 were convicted on the day of the trial. Two were sentenced to death after being found guilty of organizing meetings to prepare the November 1991 attacks, conspiracy against state institutions and conspiracy to kill members of the Tutsi community and those of the Hutu community opposed to killing Tutsi. Four were sentenced to life imprisonment and six others to prison terms ranging from five to 20 years' imprisonment.

A further trial of about 64 defendants started on 7 July and concluded on 15 July. This resulted in three death sentences and 55 others being sentenced to prison terms ranging from 10 years to life. Five people were acquitted. None of the 19 people convicted in the first two trials presented a substantial defence, but a leading defendant in the latest trial strongly challenged his prosecution. Antoine Ntirabampa, acknowledged as the PALIPEHUTU Vice-President, who was arrested in September 1991, was accused of urging refugees living abroad to return clandestinely to Burundi and carry out armed attacks. He denied the charges and insisted on being allowed to cross-examine prosecution witnesses, but it is unclear whether he was allowed to do so. He and two others were sentenced to death after being found guilty of attempting to overthrow the government of Burundi and inciting others to kill. The others were found guilty of involvement in killings or looting. One person was given a one-year sentence for producing false identity documents.

Those convicted so far in Burundi have a right to appeal, but Amnesty International is concerned that they have not had fair trials, particularly because they were not permitted an opportunity to obtain legal counsel and were unable to adequately defend themselves. The organization is also greatly concerned by the five death sentences imposed and is calling for their immediate commutation; the last executions of prisoners sentenced to death in Burundi occurred in 1981.