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**WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 29/91**

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Yugoslavia, Ethiopia and East Timor and an internal item on Uganda.

**1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL**

**Morocco - 28 August**

A short report (four pages), embargoed for 28 August 1991, will be sent out in next week's Weekly Update (14 August), along with a News Release covering recent developments in Morocco, where hundreds of Saharawis are still believed to be in detention, despite the recent release of hundreds more.

**Mauritania - 21 August**

AFR 38/07/91

A targeted news release to accompany a list of more than 300 names of people we know or suspect to have been extrajudicially executed. This follows from a targeted press release in April highlighting the same issue, but this time provides information about some 300 victims.

**Sri Lanka - 11 September ASA 37/14/91**

An international release on gross human rights violations in north-eastern Sri Lanka, the first document focusing specifically on this region of the country. A draft report was presented to the government on a recent research mission to the country to which additional information gathered during that trip will be added. The report deals with thousands of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" in North Eastern Sri Lanka. It also covers abuses by the Tamil Tigers in greater detail than any previous report on the country. The timing of the release ties in with a visit by a UN working group to the country in early October, which we hope will investigate some of the issues raised in the report.

**Mexico - 18 September**

**Mexico - Torture with Impunity AMR 41/04/91**

**News release and questions and answers sheet on a report on torture in Mexico. The main point in the report is that anyone who is arrested in Mexico is at risk of torture and that the government has done little to bring police or others to justice. The report contains good comments from bar associations and other organizations about the level of torture in the country and strong examples of torture. The news release will contain the most recent example possible.**

**China - 26 September**

**Report on administrative detention - news release and possible questions and answers. More details later.**

**ICM - 29 August to 7 September**

**Information will be provided shortly about the media strategy for the ICM.**

**2. AFR 59/WU 01/91 INTERNAL**

7 August 1991

**UGANDA: AI DELEGATION TO VISIT**

An Amnesty International delegation is visiting Uganda between 9 August and 23 August 1991 to carry out research and to meet government officials to discuss issues relating to human rights. Among the organization's concerns are reports of extrajudicial executions in areas of armed conflict, the detention without charge or trial of alleged rebels, and the possible use of serious charges by the authorities to detain alleged opponents of the government for long periods despite a lack of evidence to bring them to trial or obtain a conviction. Amnesty International representatives previously visited Uganda in February 1990.

3. EUR 48/WU 05/91 EXTERNAL  
7 August 1991

### **YUGOSLAVIA: AI APPEALS FOR HUMANE TREATMENT OF PRISONERS**

Amnesty International on Monday appealed to the Yugoslav Presidency, and to the presidents of Serbia and Croatia, to ensure that prisoners detained in the current conflict are treated humanely, following reports of extrajudicial killings and ill-treatment and torture of detainees. The human rights organization called on the parties to ensure that international humanitarian and human rights principles are observed and called for the protection of non-combatants from all acts of reprisal and violence.

Reports received by Amnesty International include accounts of an incident which took place in Croatia on 28 July in the Banija region south of Zagreb. Croatian refugees have testified that Serbian insurgents entered the village of Zamlaca, rounding up about 40 people, mostly women and the elderly, who were forced to act as a human shield, as the insurgents - firing over their heads at Croatian security forces - proceeded to the nearby village of Struga.

A 19-year old girl from Struga said she was beaten by the Serbs with rifle-butts when she refused to reveal her brother's whereabouts. She and others saw the insurgents force three Croatian police officers to undress and then beat them with rifle-butts. The injured police officers were reportedly ordered to stand up and run and were shot in the back by the Serbian insurgents.

A group of reporters saw the "human shield" as it entered the village of Struga. According to them, one of the Serbian insurgents seized a photo-reporter and began to beat him up. He then ordered the reporters to run, shouting to his followers to "shoot the reporters, kill them". His instructions were reportedly ignored. However, Egon Scotland, a reporter for the German newspaper Sueddeutsche Zeitung, who was driving in the area the same day in a clearly-marked press car, died after he was shot at and wounded, reportedly by Serbian insurgents.

Amnesty International is also concerned about reports of the death of Milenko Djuricic, a 38-year-old Serb from Borovo Naselje in Croatia, whose body, bearing marks of torture was recovered from the Danube river on 17 July 1991. According to his family he was arrested by Croatian police on 13 July. Two days later the police told his family that he had been questioned and released, but he did not return home and was not seen again until his body was found, with ankles and wrists tied, on the banks of the Danube. An investigating magistrate in Novi Sad reportedly stated that forensic examination had shown that Milenko Djuricic had died in a violent manner. Many of his ribs were broken and his face and body were severely bruised. He had been thrown into the river while still alive.

There have also been allegations that a number of Serbs arrested by Croatian police and detained in Osijek prison on charges of participation in armed rebellion, have been physically ill-treated in detention.

In an incident on 20 July, Stevo Veselinovic, a Yugoslav Army non-commissioned officer and Milos Ceprnja, a civilian employed by the Yugoslav Army, were reportedly kicked and beaten with rifle-butts for almost three hours by a large group of officers of the Croatian police in Zadar after they had been brought to a police station by a police patrol which accused them of "returning from the barricades". According to a statement issued by the headquarters of the military and naval district of Split, they were left almost unconscious and had to be brought to the Split military hospital for treatment. On 25 July the chief of police of Zadar expressed deep regret at this incident and said that disciplinary action was being taken against the police officers involved and criminal proceedings would be begun to determine individual responsibility.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the safety of civilians and members of security forces held by Serbian insurgents in Croatia, among them about 50 reportedly held in Knin.

4. AFR 25/WU 03/91 EXTERNAL  
7 August 1991

#### **ETHIOPIA: FAMILY OF FORMER POCS RECEIVING MEDICAL TREATMENT IN UK**

A family of former prisoners of conscience is in the UK at Amnesty International's invitation, receiving medical treatment in connection with their long years of imprisonment in Ethiopia.

Mulugetta Mosissa and his pregnant wife Namat Issa, both of the Oromo ethnic group, were imprisoned without trial in 1980. Their son Amonsissa was born in custody and spent his first nine years in prison, until he and his mother were released in September 1989. Mulugetta Mosissa was released in May 1991 with the fall of the Mengistu government, after almost 11 1/2 years as a prisoner of conscience. While he was still in prison, his case was highlighted by Amnesty International as part of the organization's 30th anniversary appeals campaign.

All three members of the family now have medical problems because of their time in prison. Amonsissa suffers from epilepsy and asthma – he had breathing difficulties from birth and began having seizures when he was three years old. Conditions in the prison prevented him getting proper medical treatment.

Mulugetta Mosissa, an economist, formerly working for the National Grain Board, spent his time in custody at Ethiopia's notorious torture centre in Addis Ababa, the "third police station" or Maekelawi. While there, he says he and others were repeatedly tortured, hung upside down in water and given electric shocks. "We were tortured until our flesh and bone parted," he told a meeting of Amnesty International staff on August 1.

"Maybe people may think we have done a big crime, but we did nothing at all. We were simply talking of democracy, equality, freedom of people, freedom of those who were oppressed.

"There was no food, no medicine, even no first aid," said Mulugetta Mosissa. "We were tortured there for many years without proper food, proper shelter and medication, without proper hygiene. I was sick in prison for a while but I could not get any medical treatment. We had to buy just a few tablets to get through the pain.

"I know many people who were disposed of after they died there. That was the condition that we passed through all these years. Thank you to this organization and all humanitarian organizations who were pressurising the government to let us free. I am grateful for that."

Namat Issa, a former senior official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told Amnesty International of her ordeal giving birth in custody. "When I was in labour, I was kept in prison for about 30 hours and then they took me to the hospital," she said. "I had a difficult labour and when my son was born he was already losing consciousness and had difficulty breathing. After 11 days they took me back to prison where I stayed for nearly 10 years.

"On 3 September 1989 I was released with my son because of the pressure on the government. I became a free woman and went from the little prison to the big prison, like everyone else. I had to stay without a job for almost two years.

"And then Mengistu's regime fell and I recovered my husband. Now we are here for medical treatment and we hope to get a job and live like any other human being, having human rights in the future. Thank you."

The London-based Medical Foundation for the Treatment of Torture Victims is organizing their medical treatment for Amnesty International.

5. ASA 21/WU 01/91 EXTERNAL  
7 August 1991

**INTERNAL:**

Amnesty International presented an oral statement to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization in New York, today 7 August at 10am local time. The five-page statement about East Timor will be included as part of a 37-page report (AI Index: ASA 21/14/91) which will be published by Amnesty International in August 1991. The report describes in detail the concerns outlined in the oral statement and includes testimonial evidence of serious human rights violations in East Timor. The report will be sent to sections mid-August 1991.

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**EAST TIMOR: AI GIVES STATEMENT ON HUMAN RIGHTS TO UNITED NATIONS COMMITTEE**

Short term-detention, torture and ill-treatment of alleged political opponents has increased in East Timor in the past year, Amnesty International said today in a statement to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization. The human rights organization is also concerned by persistent reports of extrajudicial executions, hundreds of unresolved cases of "disappearance" and the recent conviction of at least nine alleged Fretilin supporters sentenced in trials believed to have been unfair.

Amnesty International welcomed statements that the Indonesian Government intends to play a more active role within the international human rights community. However, serious violations have continued to occur in East Timor on a regular basis.

Amnesty International takes no position on the issue of East Timor's political status. As in previous years, the organization has presented its concerns to the Committee in the belief that discussion of East Timor's political future must be backed up by an understanding of the human rights situation there.

Serious limitations remain on the reporting of human rights developments in East Timor in spite of the "opening" of the territory to tourism and commerce in January 1989. A number of people have reportedly been detained, ill-treated and threatened by members of the security forces because of their efforts to monitor or report human rights violations. Permission to visit East Timor has still not been granted to Amnesty International; the continued denial of access raises serious questions about the sincerity of the government's commitment to human rights protection.

Short-term detention and torture seem to be part of a systematic strategy to silence real or suspected political opponents of the government and appear to be aimed at obtaining political intelligence through coercion and intimidation. More than 400 people have been detained since late 1988 - at least 200 of them since early 1990 - for alleged involvement in pro-independence political activities. Many may be or may have been prisoners of conscience.

Suspects are typically held in police or military detention centres or unofficial safehouses for periods ranging from a few hours to several weeks. It is in these centres, seldom seen by visiting journalists or foreign government delegations, that detainees are likely to be ill-treated or tortured. Most are not formally charged or tried.

Reportedly many of those detained have been subjected to torture or ill-treatment while in custody, including beatings with iron bars, batons, fists and lengths of cable and bamboo, burning with lighted



cigarettes, sexual molestation and rape, slashing with razor blades, food deprivation, immersion for long periods in fetid water, death threats and electrocution. In view of this clear evidence Amnesty International has concluded that the safety of all those detained for questioning in connection with their alleged political activities, however briefly, must be considered at risk.

At least 30 people, and possibly many more, were killed by Indonesian security forces in 1990 and early 1991 in apparent extrajudicial executions. A number of extrajudicial executions reported by Amnesty International last year have since been confirmed, and the organization continues to receive new information concerning hundreds of politically-motivated killings committed by government forces in the 1970s and 1980s. Additionally, many of the hundreds reported to have "disappeared" since 1975, the year of the annexation of East Timor by Indonesia, are feared to have been killed.

Amnesty International believes that, to date, the government's response to human rights violations has not reflected its responsibilities under international law and has, in effect, permitted the violations to continue.

The government has attempted to deflect criticism by claiming that members of the security forces responsible for human rights violations have been disciplined or brought to justice. Yet to date, Amnesty International does not know of a single police or military officer who has been convicted of torture, extrajudicial execution or any other human rights offence committed in East Timor.

Amnesty International urges the government to act openly and fully in accordance with basic human rights standards and principles based in international law and to accede as soon as possible to the most important international human rights treaties such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. As a member of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, it is now of particular importance that the Government of Indonesia acknowledge and adhere to these standards.