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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 35/91

Contained in this weekly update are external items on the USA, Yugoslavia and Togo.

US CONGRESSIONAL HEARING

A US Congressional hearing started yesterday in Washington to examine security force killings in Northern Ireland (United Kingdom). An Amnesty International representative will be presenting a paper, which could then be passed out to media there. If you get any inquiries, please contact the IS press office.

EMBARGOES

We have been asked by one of the main international agencies to try and co-ordinate a little more when sending material to them - at the moment, the same material is often sent to several offices of the same agency. If you are holding a special event and inviting one or more agencies - a press briefing for example - please let the IS know, so that we can tell the headquarters of the agencies concerned. Thanks for your help.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

USA

Enclosed in this Weekly Update is an item on an AI visit to Los Angeles. This item has already been released to some media by the IS.

China - 26 September

The news release, AI Index ASA 17/56/91, were sent out to you last week. The questions and answers sheet for the last two China reports (May 1990, ASA 17/26/90 and ASA 17/28/90) contains much of the information needed for interviews on our concerns generally. A short questions and answers dealing with our specific concerns on administrative detention and on the recent meetings where other governments have raised human rights issues will be

sent shortly.

USA - 9 October

USA - The Death Penalty and Juvenile Offenders AMR 51/23/91

International news release to accompany the external document.

African Charter - 21 October

An advice to editors on AI's activities to mark the fifth anniversary of the African Charter on Human and People's Rights coming into force will be sent to sections shortly. The advice to editors will not be embargoed, although it is intended to encourage specialist media to write about the charter on or around 21 October, African Human and People's Rights Day. The IS will be sending the advice to editors to media in Africa and specialist media in London, and section press officers are encouraged to contact their African specialist media as well.

Egypt - 23 October

Egypt - Ten years of torture MDE 12/18/91

News release to go with an external document on torture, including strong individual cases and photo material.

2. AMR 51/WU 04/91 EXTERNAL
19 September 1991

USA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGED POLICE ILL-TREATMENT IN LOS ANGELES

Amnesty International is sending a three-person fact-finding team to Los Angeles next week to investigate allegations that police routinely ill-treat suspects.

The team will meet with lawyers, police, city and county officials, and civil rights groups to get information on the scale and the nature of police brutality in the Los Angeles area.

The investigators will also be examining the procedures for investigating complaints of police brutality, both at the local and federal level, and will review how recommendations made by recent inquiries into the issue have been implemented.

The international human rights organization has received a number of reports of ill-treatment by members of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department over the past year. More recently, the video-taped beating of Rodney King in March of this year focused attention on police brutality in the Los Angeles Police Department.

Amnesty International said that its investigation into alleged police brutality in Los Angeles was part of its regular investigations into torture or ill-treatment by police in countries around the world. In the USA, the organization has reported on alleged police brutality in Chicago, and is looking into allegations of similar treatment in other states.

In 1990-91 the organization issued reports on ill-treatment by police in Austria, Brazil, India, Kenya, Turkey and United Kingdom among other countries. In its most recent annual report, torture or ill-treatment was reported in some 100 countries.

Amnesty International has carried out research and campaigns in the United States on other human rights concerns within its mandate, including the continuing use of the death penalty, the imprisonment of conscientious objectors, the fairness of trials in cases where prisoners have alleged that their prosecutions were politically motivated and the treatment of prisoners and detainees in institutions in various US states.

Fact-finding teams have visited the USA on a number of occasions to attend court hearings, review cases and examine alleged ill-treatment of prisoners.

The investigation team of Rod Morgan, Angela Wright and Anita Tiessen will be in Los Angeles from 21-28 September. Rod Morgan is Professor of Criminal Justice at Bristol University in the United Kingdom, and an expert adviser to the Council of Europe Committee for the Prevention of Torture.

Angela Wright and Anita Tiessen are staff members of Amnesty International's International Secretariat.

In line with Amnesty International's normal investigation procedures, the team will not make public statements on the details of their investigation while in Los Angeles.

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3. EUR 48/WU 06/91 EXTERNAL
19 September 1991

YUGOSLAVIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL APPEALS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS TO BE MAINTAINED

Amnesty International is again appealing for human rights standards to be upheld in Yugoslavia, as reports are received of escalating violence, killings and mutilations carried out against civilians or captured armed opponents.

The organization is urging all sides in the conflict to uphold international standards for the treatment of prisoners -- in particular to ensure that they are not tortured or executed.

Amnesty International is opposed to the torture and killing of prisoners in all circumstances - even in times of severe armed conflict, there can never be a justification for torture. The organization is also appealing for all parties to the conflict to respect the human rights of civilians caught up in the areas of fighting and ensure that there are no acts of reprisal against civilians.

Although information emerging from the conflict zones in Yugoslavia is often hard to verify, AI has received reports of a number of incidents in which civilians or captured members of armed forces have been deliberately targeted and killed by police, military or paramilitary forces.

In an incident in Cetekovac in eastern Croatia, more than 20 are said to have been killed, including unarmed civilians, by Serbian insurgents who attacked the village on 4 September 1991; an old man described to a visiting journalist how the insurgents had forced him and others to stand in line and shot dead one villager who tried to flee.

Twenty one Serbian villagers are reported to have been killed on 22 August 1991 by Croatian security forces carrying out house-to-house searches in the villages of Kinjacka, Cakle and Trnjani for insurgents believed to have fired mortars at the town of Sisak. A local police chief later denied that Croatian forces had killed civilians.

In another incident a large number of Croatian civilians and police were apparently killed in Dalj in Slavonia after the Yugoslav Army occupied the village on 1 August. Villagers have alleged that after Dalj was occupied by the army, Serbian insurgents went through it killing those left wounded. Autopsies carried out by forensic experts reportedly confirmed that some victims had been killed by a bullet in the head after having been wounded.

At least one man is reported to have died as a result of ill-treatment by police. ■edomir Biga, a Serb who died on 2 September while detained by Croatian police in Dre■nik, was said by police to have died from a heart attack. However, a hospital autopsy reportedly found that his back was severely bruised, his ribs were broken and that his death was the

result of injuries caused by blows.

4. AFR 57/WU 01/91 EXTERNAL
19 September 1991

REPUBLIC OF TOGO: AI REPRESENTATIVE TO VISIT

An Amnesty International representative is visiting the Republic of Togo from 30 September to 11 October to collect information on the current human rights situation and recent political changes. He is Dr Stephen Ellis, a British citizen who is Director of the Centre for African Studies at Leiden in the Netherlands. Representatives of Amnesty International last visited Togo in October 1989 when they met government officials, including President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, to discuss the organization's human rights concerns.