

AI Index: NWS 11/39/92

Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 1521

Amnesty International

International Secretariat

1 Easton Street

London WC1X 8DJ

United Kingdom

TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 30 SEPTEMBER 1992

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 39/92

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Macao, PLO/Lebanon and Tibet.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

(New Information)

The document on Bosnia-Herzegovina is nearly finished. The document and news release will be sent to sections next week. The embargo date is still being discussed - in view of the Indigenous Peoples' Launch, we will probably be looking at the following week.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Indigenous Peoples' Campaign - 7 October

(New Information)

CORRECTION

Please note correction to Indigenous Peoples' news release (AI Index: AMR 01/14/92) page 2, line 1 should read, "For the 1993 International Year for the World's Indigenous People, the organization is....." (not "For the 1993 UN Year of Indigenous Populations, ..")

The launch will take place in Mexico City with a news conference involving AI spokespeople and representatives of indigenous groups. The AI spokespeople will be Ligia Bolivar of the IEC; Tracy Ulltveit-Moe, researcher on indigenous peoples; and a representative of the Mexican section.

The embargo time will be 0001 hrs gmt 7 October -- this translates into 1700 hrs local time on 6 October in Mexico City.

We will send further details about the launch tomorrow.

Myanmar - 28 October

A document and news release on Myanmar, to go with an action to coincide with the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Turkey - TENTATIVELY 11 November

(New Information)

PLEASE NOTE there may still be a change to the embargo date as further problems have arisen - a final decision based on information from the EC Office will be made by tomorrow and a note to Press Officers will be sent out accordingly. The date will be moved by only a couple of days at most.

The document to go with the news release and action, Turkey: Walls of glass (AI Index: EUR 44/75/92), has been sent in the Weekly Mailing. Unfortunately it has been printed without an embargo - the document is nevertheless embargoed and should not be used before the date decided.

The document and news release go with a section level action about a wide range of human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Tunisia - 20 November

(New Information)

A weekly update item will be sent to international media to go with a document on unfair trials.

Children/AI week - 21 October

A targeted news release on children to go with a Focus article in October.

2. ASA 27/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL

30 September 1992

MACAO: MACAO FAILS TO RULE OUT THE REINSTATEMENT OF THE DEATH PENALTY AFTER HANDOVER TO CHINA

Amnesty International is concerned that the Macao Basic Law Drafting Committee decided on 27 September not to include in the Macao Draft Basic Law a provision abolishing the death penalty. As a result of the Drafting Committee's decision, the death penalty may be reinstated when the Basic Law comes into force in the Portuguese-administered territory, upon its handover to China in 1999.

The death penalty has not been used in Macao since the 19th century and is banned under the Portuguese constitution, which applies to Macao - but it is widely used in China. Amnesty International has compiled reports of over 1,065 death sentences in China in the first half of 1992 alone, and fears that the actual number of executions was several times higher.

Wang Shuwei, a spokesperson for the Drafting Committee, was quoted by the Portuguese news agency Lusa on 27 September as saying that the Drafting Committee had decided "not to mention the death penalty issue and to leave it to the consideration of the future government" of Macao after 1999.

Amnesty International regrets this decision, which it fears might facilitate the reintroduction of the death penalty in Macao after 1999. It is urgently calling on the Drafting Committee to reconsider its position. It is also calling on the governments of China and Portugal to encourage the Drafting Committee to include a provision abolishing the death penalty in Macao.

Amnesty International is also concerned that the current draft of the Basic Law still contains provisions which could gravely undermine human rights safeguards currently enjoyed by the people of Macao. Amnesty International is therefore reiterating its call to the Chinese authorities to ensure that the draft Basic Law is amended before its adoption by the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China, so as to ensure that after 1999:

- (1) all people in Macao will continue to benefit from the guarantees provided by human rights treaties which Portugal has already ratified;
- (2) all people in Macao will be afforded effective guarantees against torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
- (3) the right to life will be guaranteed to all people in Macao, and in particular that the current constitutional ban on the death penalty in Macao will be maintained;
- (4) all people in Macao will be guaranteed the right to a fair trial within a reasonable time;

(5) all people in Macao will be afforded those rights which safeguard them against being detained as prisoners of conscience – that is, for their non-violent, conscientiously-held beliefs or on account of their ethnic origin, race, colour, sex or language; and

(6) should a state of emergency be declared at any time in Macao, all people will retain the rights which, under internationally agreed norms, may never be curtailed, such as the rights to life and to freedom from torture.

Amnesty International is also calling on the Portuguese government to formally recognize that the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and other international human rights treaties ratified by Portugal currently apply to Macao. Amnesty International is urging the Chinese government to ensure that these basic standards for human rights protection will continue to apply in Macao after 1999, and to confirm this by ratifying the ICCPR and other international human rights standards, thereby also extending similar guarantees to all the people of China.

3. MDE 18/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL

30 September 1992

PLO/LEBANON: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL APPEALS AGAINST DEATH SENTENCES

Amnesty International has appealed to Yasser Arafat, Chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), to exercise clemency and not ratify the death sentences of three Palestinians in Lebanon.

It was reported on 24 September 1992 that the three men, Ayman Hammud, Munir al-Haj and Ihab Rifa'i, were sentenced to death by a PLO military tribunal at 'Ain al-Helweh refugee camp in Lebanon. They apparently belong to the Fatah Revolutionary Council of Abu Nidal and had been found guilty of murder. Ayman Hammud and Munir al-Haj are believed to be in custody; Ihab Rifa'i was tried in absentia.

Amnesty International has also appealed to the Lebanese authorities to intervene to prevent these executions from being carried out on their territory.

4. ASA 17/WU 07/92 EXTERNAL

30 September 1992

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: CHINESE "WHITE PAPER" ON TIBET FAILS TO ANSWER AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S CONCERNS

On 24 September 1992, the Information Office of China's State Council made public in Beijing a "white paper" entitled, Tibet - Its Ownership and Human Rights Situation. The preface to the twelve-part document states that the "white paper" aims to "present" the "facts" concerning "earth-shaking changes" which have taken place in Tibet in recent years. This is the third "white paper" published by the Chinese authorities since November 1991 to respond to international criticism of its human rights record.

The "white paper" makes a number of statements about the range of rights guaranteed in theory by the Chinese constitution, but Amnesty International is concerned that the exercise of these rights is severely limited in practice.

The "white paper" states that "respect for and protection of religious belief is a basic policy of the Chinese government", adding that "those who carry out law-breaking and conduct criminal activities under the guise of religion will be prosecuted according to law".

It also states that "any activity sabotaging stability and unity in Tibet and any unlawful deed creating disturbance and inciting riots runs against the basic interests of the Tibetan people and will be cracked down on relentlessly".

Amnesty International takes no position on the issue of Tibetan independence, or other issues discussed in the "white paper", such as education or the political history of Tibet. However, the organization has information about dozens of prisoners of conscience arrested and charged with "counter-revolutionary" offences for peacefully expressing their political or religious beliefs in Tibet in recent years.

In 1992, over 80 suspected pro-independence activists have reportedly been arrested by police in and around Lhasa, the capital of the Tibet Autonomous Region. Three prisoners of conscience whose cases had been taken up by Amnesty International have been released since April 1992. Dozens of others remain in detention despite repeated appeals by Amnesty International and other human rights organizations.

Amnesty International also continues to receive reports of torture and ill-treatment of Tibetan detainees. A number of former detainees have died in the months following their release, and Amnesty International is concerned that the deaths may have resulted from ill-treatment suffered in detention.

(The previous two "white papers" concerned human rights policies and the use of "corrective labour" in China; see respectively Amnesty International's documents ASA 17/WU 03/91 of 13 November 1991 and ASA 17/WU 06/92 of 26 August 1992.)

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No. of words: 787

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DATE: 2 OCTOBER 1992

ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 39/92

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Jordan.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Bosnia-Herzegovina - 14 October

(New Information)

The document and news release on Bosnia-Herzegovina will probably be embargoed for 0001 hrs gmt Wednesday 14 October 1992. We hope to have the materials with sections next week. It is possible that the news release will also refer to the Kosovo document from June, AI Index:EUR 48/18/92.

Turkey - 11 November

(New Information)

PLEASE NOTE the embargo for the Turkey news release is confirmed at 0001 hrs gmt Wednesday 11 November.

Document to go with the news release and action, Turkey: Walls of glass (AI Index: EUR 44/75/92), has been sent in the Weekly Mailing. Unfortunately it has been printed without an embargo - the document is nevertheless embargoed and should not be used before 11 November.

The document and news release go with a section level action about a wide range of human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

2. MDE 16/WU 03/92 EXTERNAL
EMBARGOED FOR MONDAY 5 OCTOBER 1992

INTERNAL

Please note that the following item is embargoed for Monday 5 October. The IS Press Office will send it to specialist middle east media on Monday.

EXTERNAL

JORDAN: GOVERNMENT GRANTS LEGAL REGISTRATION TO AI GROUPS AND REITERATES
COMMITMENT TO HUMAN RIGHTS

The government of Jordan granted legal registration to Amnesty International's membership in the country and reiterated its commitment to human rights protection during a visit by the organization's Secretary General, Ian Martin. In the course of the visit, the Amnesty International delegation was received by King Hussein bin Talal.

Ian Martin, accompanied by three members of the organization's International Secretariat, visited Jordan between 24 September and 1 October 1992. He visited Amnesty International's groups in Amman and Irbid and attended a number of events organized by them, including a children's meeting on the rights of the child, held under the auspices of Queen Noor Al-Hussein, who attended its opening session.

Ian Martin was received by King Hussein Bin Talal and Crown Prince Hassan Bin Talal and held discussions with the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, the Minister of Higher Education, the speakers of the Upper and Lower House of Parliament and the Director General of the Public Security Directorate (PSD). Members of the Amnesty International delegation also met the Deputy Director for Administrative affairs at the General Intelligence Department and observed the opening sessions of a State Security Court trial of two Members of Parliament and two others.

Amnesty International's membership in Jordan, to which legal registration has been issued, comprises some 250 members in several parts of the country organized in 18 groups. Legal registration in Jordan follows that granted elsewhere in the Arab world to Amnesty International's membership in Tunisia, Algeria and Sudan (before the change in government led to the dissolution of Amnesty International and other organizations in that country). Amnesty International groups in Egypt are currently awaiting the granting of their application to be legally registered.

The Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Higher Education and the PSD General Director expressed the intention to further incorporate human rights education in the curriculum at all levels of education and into the training of PSD officers.

In addition to the activities of Amnesty International's membership in Jordan, Ian Martin discussed with Jordanian officials human rights promotion and protection in the Arab world and in Jordan. Amnesty International welcomed King Hussein's calls for an Arab Human Rights Charter, which the organization believes should fully reflect existing international standards. It also welcomed the lifting of the state of emergency earlier in 1992 and other human rights initiatives such as the repeal of legislation which led to the imprisonment of prisoners of conscience and the accession by Jordan to the United Nations Convention Against Torture.

At the same time Amnesty International stressed the need for further human rights progress, particularly strengthening safeguards against ill-treatment and to ensure fair trial for political detainees -- such as prompt access to lawyers and family, the introduction of the right of appeal before the State Security Court, and an end to all executions. Amnesty International expressed the hope that Jordan would ratify the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

In the current case before the State Security Court four defendants, including two Members of Parliament, are being tried on charges including membership of an illegal, violent organization and possession of weapons and explosives. Some of the charges refer to capital offences. Amnesty International will continue to monitor the trial proceedings which are expected to last several weeks.

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OCCUPATION OF SWISS SECTION

The Swiss section was occupied this morning by a supporters of the Turkish Communist Party - Marxist Leninist (TKPML) who were concerned about the treatment of the Abimael Guzmán, the leader of the Communist Party of Peru, Shining Path. The TKPML supporters were urging AI to take action to make sure that Abimael Guzmán was not ill-treated in detention in Peru and asking for a statement to be faxed to various organizations.

The occupation has now ended, but the leaders of the group said that similar occupations might take place in other countries, so we would urge all sections to take special security precautions.

Sections should also know that a letter to President Fujimori has already been sent urging the authorities to take all necessary steps to ensure in practice that Abimael be given a fair trial. A weekly update item giving more details follows.

No. of words: 313

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2ND ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 39/92

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Peru.

1. AMR 46/WU 03/92 EXTERNAL

2 October 1992

PERU: AI URGES GOVERNMENT TO GUARANTEE ABIMAEEL GUZMAN A FAIR TRIAL

Amnesty International wrote to President Alberto Fujimori on 2 October urging the authorities to ensure that Abimael Guzmán Reynoso, leader of the Communist Party of Peru (Shining Path), [for tr: Partido Comunista del Peru (Sendero Luminoso)], PCP, be given a fair trial. Abimael Guzmán is currently being tried by a special military court on criminal charges under Peru's anti-terrorism laws.

Amnesty International has firmly condemned abuses by the PCP as well as human rights violations committed by Peruvian government forces. In calling for a fair trial for all political prisoners (including those who have used or advocated violence), Amnesty International urges governments to act in accordance with internationally recognized standards.

The organization is concerned that the conditions and procedures under which Abimael Guzmán is being tried may fall short of international standards for fair trial. Reports allege that the accused is not being tried by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal; that since he was transferred from police to military custody for the commencement of his trial, he has been allowed only limited access to his lawyer; and that his lawyer, at least initially, was obstructed when attempting to gain access to case records and specific charges faced by his client.

In calling for a fair trial, Amnesty International urged that Abimael Guzmán have the right to competent, independent and impartial tribunal established by law; have adequate time and facilities, including access to documents and all necessary evidence, for the preparation of his case; that he be given adequate opportunity to communicate freely and privately with his counsel; and that his lawyer be able to properly counsel and represent his client.

In the letter the organization stated that it would appreciate being informed of what concrete steps have been or will be taken to ensure that the trial of Abimael Guzmán is conducted within the terms and spirit of the international human rights standards to which the Peruvian state has repeatedly declared its adherence.

