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**TO: PRESS OFFICERS**

**FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS**

**DATE: 23 APRIL 1993**

**WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 39/93**

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on the USA.

**NEWS INITIATIVES**

**USA - Juvenile Death Penalty**

Please note that Gary Graham is scheduled to be executed in Texas on 29 April. Details of his case, which was based on very weak evidence, are included in UA, AI Index: AMR 51/22/93, UA AI Index: AMR 51/29/93, as well as documents: USA: Imminent execution of juvenile offender, AI Index: AMR 51/23/93, and USA: Imminent execution of juvenile offender (update), AI Index: AMR 51/28/93.

Included in this weekly update is an item on this case - his will be 200th execution in the USA since the resumption of the Death Penalty in the country in 1976. The weekly will be sent out to international media on Monday by the IS Press Office for immediate release.

The IS Press Office has only just been alerted to this case and about the request for action (including demonstrations) that was sent out from the IS today, so apologies for the late notice.

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES**

**Bangladesh - 28 April**

Document on serious human rights violations in Bangladesh, accompanied by a news release which has already been sent to you.

**Tadzhikistan - 5 May**

Publication and news release on killings in the context of civil war - with striking similarities to Bosnia-Herzegovina. The news release was sent out to you on Friday.

**Indigenous People - 12 May**

News release planned to accompany Focus article on Human rights violations against indigenous people worldwide. Indigenous people will be one of the main themes of our work on the World Conference.

**Guatemala - 19 May**

A document or publication with a news release on a full range of recent human rights violations (in the past year or so) in Guatemala. Unfortunately, the document is running behind schedule and will not be in the Weekly Mailing from the IS until 12 May, one week before the embargo. Please get in touch with the IS if you need a copy earlier.

#### Egypt - 26 May

A document or publication and news release on all our concerns in Egypt. These include very high numbers of prisoners and torture.

#### TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

#### Somalia - 30 April

A 10-page document with AI's recommendations on human rights connected with UN talks and urging Somali political groups to stop human rights abuses, and a weekly update item are currently being written. They will be sent out to you by fax/e-mail/telex early next week as the document is being released on Friday 30 April. The IS press office is not sending this out to media, though you may wish to - either way, there may be media enquiries about it, so the weekly update will help deal with them.

#### Brazil - 7 May, 1600 hrs gmt

PLEASE NOTE - The document has been sent out in this week's Weekly Mailing dated simply May 1993. Please make sure that anyone who is likely to see it in your section knows that it is embargoed for 7 May.

Document on prison massacre, including new forensic information. Weekly update item to go with it will be sent out early next week. Sections are also being asked to carry out campaign work in connection with this document.

#### Malawi - 20 May

Document on human rights violations and the referendum and weekly update item to go with it, which will be sent to international media by the IS Press Office.

#### Unconfirmed news initiatives

News releases or embargoed weekly update items are being considered on the following subjects:

Nagorno-Karabakh (to go with section-level action, late May)

Aceh, Indonesia (14 July)

#### Section Initiatives

#### Europe - Peter Gabriel fundraising opportunity

PLEASE PASS THIS INFORMATION ON TO YOUR FUNDRAISING DEPARTMENT.

The Swedish Section have sent us a fax saying that they approached Peter Gabriel and his manager about collecting money and handing out information at his concert in Stockholm. Twenty AI members were able to attend the concert for free and collected around £1,000 sterling.

The Swedish Section have spoken to Peter Gabriel's manager about other sections being able to do the same thing during his tour in Europe, which takes in venues in France, the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, Germany and the UK between now and early June. They have also provided the following contact number: Probono Management, attention Adrian Irvine, fax number +44 71 700 1846.

We have sent details of the tour, provided by the Swedish Section, to John Baguley at the British Section (who is involved in the international fundraising working group). The original fax was from Maria Mirsch at the Swedish Section. Hopefully, this information should help your fundraisers - thanks for making sure it gets to the right people in your section.

**French Section - European Press Officers' Meeting**

The second European Press Officers' meeting will take place in Paris this year. The date of this meeting is now fixed for 15 and 16 May as the majority of you asked for. It will be focused on two themes: Audiovisual work (production and TV experiences) and how to improve it; and the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

**European World Conference Press Briefing in June**

The British Section Press Office has been talking to the EC project office and the Francophone Belgium Press Officer about holding a European press briefing in Brussels for MEPs and for journalists who will be covering the World Conference. The date will probably be Tuesday, June 8th in the morning. The aim will be to look at the EC's role as a whole in terms of its internal shortcomings (Asylum issues, etc), external policies - aid/development, etc, and also to look at Europe's role within the UN.

Although the idea has been suggested by the British Section, it is hoped that all European Section Press Officers will be interested in being involved. For further information please contact either Daphne Davies, in the British Section Press Office or Johannes in the EC project office.

Weekly Update NWS 11/39/93

2. AMR 51/WU 03/93 EXTERNAL  
23 April 1993

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE - MONDAY 26 APRIL 1993

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: 200TH EXECUTION - GRIM INDICTMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD**

If the execution of juvenile offender Gary Graham goes ahead in Texas on 29 April 1993 it will be the 200th execution to be carried out in the USA since the reinstatement of the death penalty in the 1970s - a grim indictment of the USA's record on human rights, said Amnesty International.

The organization is appealing for clemency on humanitarian grounds in the case of Gary Graham - convicted and sentenced to death in November 1981 for the murder of Bobby Lambert, a white man, in May of that year when Graham was only 17 years old.

"The death penalty is a violation of the most basic human right of all - the right to life," said Amnesty International. "It is a cruel, inhuman and degrading act which must be abolished as a matter of urgency."

Gary Graham went on hunger strike at the beginning of this month and intended to continue until his execution date. According to press reports, the state authorities could seek a court order to force feed him in order to render him fit for execution. Amnesty International is seeking more information on this point and believes there are serious concerns surrounding Gary Graham's case:

- The evidence against Graham was extremely weak. According to information issued by his lawyers, Graham's capital murder conviction was based solely on his identification by a single witness. No other evidence linked Graham to the crime.
- The single eye-witness testified that she had seen Lambert's killer for a "split second" while sitting in her car some 30 feet from the crime. About two weeks later, when Graham was in custody for other offences, the eye-witness picked him out at a police line-up. She had earlier failed to identify him from photographs.
- Two other witnesses, both of whom were much nearer Lambert's assailant at the time of the killing, subsequently failed to identify Graham.
- Since his conviction, four people have stated in affidavits that Graham was with them at the time of the crime, but the courts have refused to consider this evidence. Texas law requires that motions for a new trial based on newly discovered evidence must be made within 30 days of sentence.
- On appeal, Graham's lawyer argued that Graham was inadequately represented by his trial lawyers who failed to fully explore or present alibi evidence. It was also argued that his trial counsel had failed to order a full range of psychological tests but relied on a simple competency test conducted by the state. (A later psychiatric examination found possible brain damage caused by a number of childhood head injuries.)
- Seven of the eight juvenile offenders on death row in Texas are black or Hispanic, three of them from Harris County where Graham was tried. According to Graham's lawyer, Harris County is well-known to discriminate against African Americans in its criminal justice system, particularly young offenders. All but one of the jurors in Gary Graham's case were white, as was the prosecutor.

An appeal to the US Supreme Court was dismissed in January 1993. By a narrow majority of five votes to four, the Court rejected the claim that the Texas death penalty was unconstitutional in not allowing the jury to consider youth as a separate mitigating circumstance in the sentencing proceeding. The Court did not consider the merits of the claim, instead holding that Graham was seeking a "new rule of law" which could not be retroactively applied to his case. The dissenting opinion vigorously disputed this ruling.

Under Texas clemency rules, the governor may commute a death sentence only if she receives a favourable recommendation from a majority of the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles. The Board has never granted clemency in any case since the death penalty was reinstated in the late 1970s.

Press articles in Texas have compared Graham's case with the recent case of an 18-year-old white supremacist whom an all-white Texas jury sentenced to probation after he was convicted of participating in the murder of a black man.

**Amnesty International said that the execution of juvenile offenders is one issue that should be urgently addressed at the UN World Conference on Human Rights to be held in Vienna in June.**

**"We urge President Bill Clinton to ensure that the US Government takes full advantage of the World Conference to reaffirm the USA's commitment to all human rights - including ending the practice of executing juvenile offenders," said the organization.**

**The execution of juvenile offenders aged under 18 at the time of the crime is prohibited under international human rights treaties and standards. The US is one of only seven countries known to have executed juvenile offenders in the last decade (the others are Barbados, which raised its minimum age to 18 in 1989; Iran; Iraq; Nigeria; Pakistan; Bangladesh).**

**Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases as a violation of the right to life, the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment, as enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**