
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 41/95

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (This item is being targeted to media in the Federal Republic only.)

EXTERNAL - Algeria (A reactive piece to be used by press officers for answering questions, the I.S. will target to international Middle East media.)

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Iraqi Kurdistan (Northern Iraq) - 28 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 266 & 35/95
Campaign on Women - 7 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 12/95, 34/95 & 37/95

Brazil - 27 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 29/95

RWANDA - 6 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

SYRIA - 11 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 32/95

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

CAMBODIA - 14 MARCH - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

EVENTS AND MISSIONS

NB: The details below are for your information only, and there may or may not be media work involved. Can you please not publicize anything until further notice from the IS.

MISSION TO KENYA 16 March - 2 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

MISSION TO BURUNDI 27 February - 14 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

EMBARGOED FOR USE UNTIL 27 FEBRUARY 1995
AI INDEX: EUR 70/WU 01/95

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF YUGOSLAVIA: TWO YEARS LATER, ABDUCTED PEOPLE MUST NOT BE FORGOTTEN

Two years ago, on this date, more than 20 people, Serbian and Montenegrin citizens, "disappeared" from a train as it briefly crossed into Bosnian territory under the control of Bosnian Serb forces.

Amnesty International today renewed its calls to the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to Bosnian Serb political and military leaders to investigate the abduction of these passengers and bring those responsible to justice.

On 27 February 1993, these passengers - 20 Muslims and a retired Yugoslav Army officer of Croat origin - were travelling from the Yugoslav capital, Belgrade, to the Montenegrin town of Bar. Armed men forced them off the train, on which officers of Serbia's police force were also travelling, as it briefly crossed into Bosnian territory under the control of Bosnian Serb forces. They have not been seen since.

In an earlier incident in October 1992, 17 Muslims, one of them a woman, were similarly abducted from a bus by armed and masked men operating in Serb-controlled Bosnian territory. The fate of all 38 people abducted in these two incidents remains unknown.

"The families of those who "disappeared", who have so long remained in painful ignorance of their fate, should be provided with full and truthful information and those responsible for these crimes be brought to justice," Amnesty International said.

Despite public undertakings to investigate the "disappearances" made by federal Yugoslav, Serbian and Montenegrin officials and by Bosnian Serb representative Radovan Karad_i_, the truth about these events remains unknown.

In July 1993 Bosnian Serb officials reportedly sent a statement to the Serbian Ministry of the Interior that the abductions of February 1993 were "carried out by members of a paramilitary group which was active in the area of Rudo and Višegrad" and which was "outside the control of the military and police command".

The statement said there were "well-founded indications" that the group had been "manipulated and incited to carry out these acts by a foreign secret service in order to satanize the Serbian nation in the media". According to the statement, the group had been "broken up and some members have been arrested

for investigation". However, the results of this investigation have never been made public.

A Yugoslav state commission set up in October 1992 and a Montenegrin parliamentary commission established in February 1993 have failed to provide new information. The latter was obliged to report last year that a number of federal, Serbian and Montenegrin officials had not even answered its requests for information although there was a reason to believe that some had information which they were not ready to volunteer.

Amnesty International notes that one of the men who has been publicly named by the President of Yugoslavia and in the press, in connection with the "disappearances" was twice arrested and released in 1992 and 1993, but was not investigated on charges connected with the abductions. He was arrested a third time in April 1994 in Belgrade but was released at the end of the month. The Yugoslav President claimed that it had proved impossible to find any evidence against him.

Amnesty International also notes, however, that the names of several witnesses to the abductions had been published in the press. On release the man was reportedly immediately rearrested and handed over to the Bosnian Serbs, who according to the Yugoslav President, released him.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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ALGERIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION

Amnesty International has urged the Algerian authorities to ensure that an independent investigation is promptly carried out to establish the circumstances in which scores of detainees were killed in Serkadji Prison last week.

"The findings of the investigation and the names of all those killed must be made public as soon as possible," Amnesty International said.

The Algerian authorities have announced that 96 detainees and four prison guards were killed in the course of a mutiny in the prison on 22 and 23 February, but reports from other sources indicate that the number of detainees killed by the security forces inside the prison may be higher than that announced so far.

No public investigation was carried out into a previous incident in which prisoners were reported to have been killed by members of the security forces in the course of a mutiny on 14 and 15 November 1994 in Berrouaghia Prison.

Amnesty International has repeatedly called for independent and public investigations into increasingly widespread reports of serious human rights violations committed by the Algerian security forces, including extrajudicial executions and torture and ill-treatment of detainees held in often illegally prolonged incommunicado detention.

"Unless the Algerian authorities are prepared to carry out independent and public investigations into human rights violations committed by their security forces their stated commitment to respect human rights will continue to sound hollow," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International is aware of the serious level of violence by armed Islamist groups in Algeria, and it condemns in the strongest terms the continuing and widespread killings of civilians by these groups.

"The armed Islamist groups must put an end to such practices, and their political leadership must clearly and unequivocally call on them to do so instead of seeking to justify their actions, for such atrocities can never be justified," the organization said.

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