
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 45/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - YUGOSLAVIA, CHINA, BURUNDI

PLEASE NOTE: Caroline Moorhead has written an article critical of AI re: political killings in the Index on Censorship publication. We have responded to this, if sections are interested in getting a copy of our response please contact me. Thanks - Dina

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161/26

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

South Korea - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 32/94

Jordan - 22 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/94

South Africa (Bophuthatswana) - 11 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 36/94

Turkey - 6 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 26/94

Hong Kong - 21 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 36/94

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

****Colombia - 15 March**** - PLEASE NOTE: The embargo time of the Colombia campaign launch is 1700 hrs GMT, Tuesday 15 March 1994. All materials are embargoed until then. SEE NEWS SERVICES 40/94 AND 123/93 + UAs AMR 23/56+57/93

South Africa - 31 March - POSTPONED INDEFINITELY

Saudi Arabia - 10 May - NOTE CHANGE OF DATE - more details to follow Burundi - 16 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 36/94

INTERNAL

AV NEWS

PERU VIDEO

"Abducted"

58m, colour

Produced by Bernard Debord of Premier Generation in collaboration with France 2 television.

1983

This documentary provides a powerful visual record of the investigative work undertaken by an Amnesty researcher during the course of a mission to Peru. It includes interviews with the human rights workers in the country and relatives of the disappeared and also footage of the discovery of an unmarked mass grave.

This video has been made available to Amnesty International for non-broadcast use and should prove a useful tool for publicising our concerns in the current campaign against "disappearances" and E.JEs. The video is now available in a French and an international generic version together with transcripts in French, English and Spanish. We are expecting to receive an English version within the next 2 weeks.

Orders for this video should be sent to the Audiovisual Unit at the International Secretariat. Please state the format and language you require. An order form with full details will be sent out once all the language versions have been completed, but in the meantime contact the IS if your section requires further information and a script in advance.

News Service 45/94

**AI INDEX: EUR 48/WU 01/1994
8 March 1994**

YUGOSLAVIA: UNFAIR TRIALS OF ETHNIC ALBANIANS

The human rights situation in Kosovo province is deteriorating, with the level of violence by the largely Serbian police force on the increase, said Amnesty International today.

The human rights organization believes that violence is frequently being used to obtain confessions or other evidence from ethnic Albanian political defendants, in order to gain convictions and prison sentences.

Between July and September 1993 over 90 ethnic Albanians from Kosovo province were arrested on charges of making preparation for armed uprising. They were said to be planning, by force of arms, the secession of Kosovo from the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) and its independence or unification with neighbouring Albania. To Amnesty International's knowledge, none of those arrested were charged with using violence; in some cases they were charged with possessing or smuggling weapons and with making plans to organize and train paramilitary units.

By the end of February 1994, 60 people had been convicted and sentenced to up to ten years' imprisonment. On the basis of what Amnesty International has so far learned, it believes that at least some of those imprisoned are prisoners of conscience, and that charges against them of seeking to change Kosovo's status by force were not convincingly substantiated in court.

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about allegations that many of the accused were severely beaten and otherwise ill-treated by police and/or state security service officers following arrest. These allegations have been made by defendants and by their lawyers who claim their clients were visibly bruised when they visited them in prison. In some cases prison medical records and forensic examinations support these allegations, although in others requests for medical examinations were ignored by the authorities or delayed.

It is not uncommon for ethnic Albanians to be convicted entirely, or very largely, on the basis of statements made during investigation proceedings. Prosecutors and judges, following the dismissal of ethnic Albanians after they refused to recognize Serbian authority in the province, are mainly Serbs and Montenegrins. They commonly accept these uncorroborated confession statements uncritically, disregarding contradictory statements to the court, and failing to consider even evidence of torture.

Amnesty International is also concerned about frequent breaches of procedure in these cases which have undermined the defendants' right to defence, in particular detention in police custody well beyond the statutory three days, and difficulties and delays experienced by lawyers in gaining access to their clients and to court files.

In a recent report Amnesty International documents its concerns and recommendations and gives details of a number of case examples in which allegations of torture and ill-treatment have been made by ethnic Albanian detainees and their lawyers.

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News Service 45/84

AI INDEX: ASA 17/WU 03/1994

8 March 1994

CHINA: SOME DISSIDENTS RELEASED FOLLOWING RECENT ARRESTS, OTHERS STILL DETAINED

A number of dissidents detained last week in China have been released after being kept in police custody for periods ranging from 24 hours to several days. Further arrests have also been made and some of those originally detained still remain in custody.

Those still being held include Zhou Guoqiang, a lawyer and signatory of a "Peace Charter" issued in November 1993 which called for democratic reforms; Yuan Hongbing, a law professor at Beijing University; and Wang Jiaqi, a postgraduate law student in Beijing, who were all reported to have been taken into police custody last week. Their detention was officially confirmed on 4 March by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Two other dissidents and former prisoners of conscience are reported to have been detained on 6 March 1994. Zhai Weimin, a former student at Beijing's Economic Institute who was released in September 1993 after spending three and a half years in prison for his involvement in the 1989 protests, is said to have been seized by police and taken away in a car while he was walking in Beijing's university district on 6 March. Ma Shaofang, a former student leader in Beijing who was jailed for three years after the 1989 crackdown on the pro-democracy protest, is said to have been missing since 6 March; some reports indicate that he was detained by police on that day.

Those freed include Wei Jingsheng, China's most prominent dissident, who was held for 30 hours after being taken into police custody in Beijing on 4 March. Official sources said he was held for violating his parole conditions, imposed when he was released on parole in September 1993, six months before the end of his 15 years prison sentence. Qian Yumin, also a signatory of the "Peace Charter", was released on 5 March after being detained for four days in Beijing. In Shanghai, Yang Zhou, a human rights campaigner, and six other dissidents were freed on 4 March after being held by police for 24 hours. Some of them were reportedly warned by police to change "their way of thinking" or to keep quiet during the forthcoming visit to China next week of US Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

On 7 March, the official New China News Agency (NCNA) published further information about Zhou Guoqiang, Yuan Hongbing and Wang Jiaqi. It cited the Ministry of Public Security as saying that all three were "being investigated according to law by public and state security organs as they are suspected of being involved in unlawful acts in inciting turmoil and disrupting order, or in criminal cases". The NCNA report did not indicate whether any charges had been brought against the three men or where they were being held.

On 5 March, the Hong Kong China Agency (CNA) said that Zhou Guoqiang was accused of "colluding with overseas hostile forces (and) disturbing social order". According to the CNA, these accusations were based on his activities to promote the "Peace Charter", his contacts with foreign reporters, his "illegal installation of a fax machine", and "his plans to distribute T-shirts bearing provocative slogans" during the forthcoming meeting of the National People's Congress later this month. On the same day, officials at Beijing University reportedly confirmed that Yuan Hongbing had been detained for "involvement in a criminal case". According to unofficial sources, both he and Wang Jiaqi had helped organize a petition, addressed to the authorities in January 1994 by some 350 people, to seek justice in a case of alleged police brutality.

Amnesty International is reiterating its call to the government for the immediate and unconditional release of Zhou Guoqiang, Yuan Hongbing and Wang Jiaqi, unless they are to be charged, without delay, with criminal offences recognized by and in accordance with international standards.

Amnesty International is also calling on the government to clarify the situation of Zhai Weimin and Ma Shaofeng, and if they are detained as reported, to release them or disclose the reason for their detention and their whereabouts.

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News Service 45/94

AI INDEX: AFR 16/WU 04/1994
8 March 1994

BURUNDI: MORE THAN 200 UNARMED CIVILIANS KILLED IN THE CAPITAL, BUJUMBURA

Army forces allegedly massacred more than 200 unarmed civilians in Burundi during a night-time raid on 6 March 1994, according to the government and other sources contacted today by Amnesty International. Virtually all the victims, who include women and children, are said to be members of the Tutsi ethnic group. Amnesty International is concerned that further killings are likely, unless immediate steps are taken to prevent their recurrence and the military authorities allow and cooperate with an independent investigation into these killings.

Military commanders are reported to have denied that the security forces were involved in the killings in the Kamenge zone of the capital Burundi, Bujumbura. But non-military sources in Bujumbura point to the use of bayonets and the swiftness and skill with which the killings were perpetrated as evidence of military involvement.

On 7 March government ministers and foreign diplomats visited Kamenge, as bodies were being collected from homes and roadsides. One government minister has told Amnesty International that on arrival in Kamenge they first saw only bodies of men, but houses were empty. Later, they established that many bodies of women and children had been transported in military trucks and dumped by soldiers along in the Ntahangwa and Rusizi rivers in Bujumbura. Neither the military nor government authorities are known to have initiated any formal investigation into the massacre.

The killings appear to be a show of strength orchestrated by the army following the refusal by some Hutu civilians in Kamenge to be disarmed by gendarmes. Hutu are reported to have refused to be disarmed because Hutu civilians in other parts of Bujumbura have been killed by armed Tutsi civilians. The attack also appears to have been a reprisal for the reported killing some days earlier of several gendarmes during a shoot-out with some armed civilians. Army commanders are reported to have subsequently announced that they would use the army to disarm the civilians responsible. However, army activity resulted in further violence. Army commanders are reported to have ignored pleas by government ministers on 5 March for the security forces to leave the area and stop attacks on civilians. The army activity culminated in the 6 March massacre.

The latest killings are a continuation of the violence and instability which racked Burundi when the army murdered Burundi's first Hutu President, Melchior Ndadaye, elected in June 1993, and other senior government and National Assembly officials during a coup attempt on 21 October 1993. Between October and December 1993 as many as 100,000 or more civilians were killed, many of them Hutu executed extrajudicially by the security forces. More than 50 civilians were killed at the end of January and at the start of February 1994. A commission of inquiry set up by the government in December 1993 has failed to begin investigations into the coup attempt and the killings.

Amnesty International is calling on the Burundi authorities to promptly set up an independent and impartial public inquiry into these killings with a view to identifying and bringing the perpetrators to justice. The Burundi government and commanders of the security forces should ensure that the armed forces are prevented from carrying out reprisal or other attacks on civilians and that these are effectively protected by the security forces, according to the human rights organization. Amnesty International is also urging commanders of the security forces to publicly condemn these killings and issue clear instructions to the security forces that the deliberate killing of civilians is a criminal offence and that anyone found responsible will be brought to justice.

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