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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: External - Bosnia-Herzegovina

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Indonesia (Aceh) - 28 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 79

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Taiwan - 22 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 82 AND 83

Laos - 9 August

A news service item is being prepared to go with the SEAMRAN action on Laos, being launched on 9 August. It may be used to help raise publicity.

Georgia - 10 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 83

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Saudi Arabia - 14 September

Togo - 22 September

Sudan - 29 September

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EJEs and "Disappearances" - 20 October

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BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED BY KILLING OF 12 PEOPLE IN SARAJEVO WATER QUEUE

Amnesty International wrote to Dr Radovan Karad_i_ on 14 July expressing concern about reports of the deliberate and arbitrary killings on 12 July of 12 people who, together with others, were waiting in a queue to collect water in the Dobrinja district in Sarajevo. Among those who died were women and children. Sixteen other people were seriously injured on the same occasion.

Press reports indicate that the group of unarmed citizens queuing for water was deliberately targeted and they were the victims of a mortar shell fired from Serbian positions several hundred yards away.

Amnesty International is aware that a previous, similarly tragic incident in the past, involving the killing of citizens of Sarajevo who were queuing for bread, gave rise to controversy as to which armed forces were responsible for these deaths. However, in the most recent case there appears to be little doubt that the victims were killed by Serb forces and had been deliberately targeted.

International humanitarian law is unequivocal in stating that in an armed conflict, people who take no active part in the hostilities must be distinguished from those who do. People who are not involved in a conflict, including most civilians, must be distinguished from military personnel and others who are directly involved and may influence the course of the conflict. This principle is directly derived from the protection of the individual enshrined in Article 3 common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949, which forbids governments and their opponents alike to torture, to deliberately kill civilians taking no part in hostilities, to harm those who are wounded, captured or seeking to surrender, or to take hostages.

The conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina has been persistently characterized by the extreme suffering it has brought upon the civilian population. The gross human rights abuses inflicted on civilians can only be brought to an end by the determination and authority of all civil and military leaders. Amnesty International believes this requires a strengthening of chains of command and the demonstrated will to bring those who commit human rights abuses to justice. The killing of the 12 Sarajevo citizens is only one among the many terrible human rights abuses to which citizens of all national and religious backgrounds have fallen victim in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Amnesty International appealed to Dr Radovan Karad_i_ to institute an investigation into this latest incident and to ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. The organization further repeated its earlier appeals to him to ensure that all military under his command respect the Geneva Conventions, the two 1977 Protocols and other international standards and end human rights abuses.

Amnesty International welcomed the agreement reached on 12 July to reconnect Sarajevo with water, gas and electricity. The organization expressed its profound hope that this agreement will be honoured and that the threat to the health and lives of the citizens of Sarajevo constituted by their lack be removed.

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