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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 129/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - UNITED KINGDOM, EGYPT

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

**GEORGIA** - Some of you will have noticed a considerable amount of press coverage of the conflict in Georgia, with Georgian sources claiming "ethnic cleansing" and genocide by the Abkhazians, a potential humanitarian crisis with refugees etc. We are monitoring the situation very closely but have nothing new to add at the moment. However, we did produce a document in July 1993, Georgia: Alleged human rights violations during the conflict in Abkhazia (AI Index: EUR 56/07/93), which still reflects an accurate picture of the problems.

**EGYPT** - News service enclosed may be used to update the case of General Sa'd al-Din al-Shazli who was featured as a worldwide appeal case in the October Newsletter. Please convey the news of his release as soon as possible to members in your section. Letter writers are encouraged to write letters welcoming his release.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Myanmar - 8 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111  
Yugoslavia/Kosovo - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 117/126/128  
EJEs and "Disappearances" - 20 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 124/126/128  
India & Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 126

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Council of Europe Summit - 7 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 122  
Francophone Summit - 11 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111/126  
North Korea - 15 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88/119/124  
Afghanistan - 26 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 124  
Algeria - 28 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 127

## FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting - 21-25 October (undecided)  
Iran - 3 November (International)  
Venezuela - 10 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 121  
Papua New Guinea - 19 November (targeted)  
Colombia - 16 March 1993 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

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**UNITED KINGDOM: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED BY PLANS TO ABOLISH RIGHT TO SILENCE**

Amnesty International is very concerned about the announcement by the Home Secretary Michael Howard, during the Conservative Party conference, that he plans to abolish the right of an accused or suspected person to remain silent.

The right to remain silent has already been curtailed in Northern Ireland and Amnesty International believes that this is inconsistent with international fair trial standards. "If someone in a police cell or witness box cannot stay silent, then their right not to testify against themselves or confess guilt may be violated," said Amnesty International. "That right is enshrined in international standards.

"Worse still, if remaining silent can be used against someone, then the most basic fair trial principle of all, the presumption of innocence, is turned on its head. The United Kingdom has a duty under international law to give everyone a fair trial - the abolition of the right to remain silent puts the UK's commitment to fair trials under question."

In February of this year, Amnesty International published a document on this issue (United Kingdom, Northern Ireland: The Right of Silence). In addition, after examining this issue in detail both the most recent Royal Commission on Criminal Justice, which was specifically mandated to examine the right of silence, and the 1981 Royal Commission recommended that the right of accused or suspected person's to remain silent be maintained.

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**EGYPT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES RELEASE OF GENERAL SA'D AL-DIN AL-SHAZLI**

Amnesty International welcomes the release from prison of General Sa'd al-Din al-Shazli, former Ambassador and Commander of the Egyptian armed forces, by a presidential amnesty on 6 October. He had served half of a three year prison term on charges of disclosing military secrets about the 1973 Arab-Israeli war in a book published in 1981.

General Sa'd al-Din al-Shazli was arrested on 14 March 1992 on his return to Cairo from self-imposed exile in Algeria. Amnesty International was seriously concerned about the fairness of the 1983 trial, the procedures of which did not meet international standards for fair trial. The organization has been campaigning for an immediate retrial of Sa'd al-Din al-Shazli or for his release.

----- See Worldwide Appeals, October 1993 International Newsletter

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