
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 131/93

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AI INDEX: NWS 11/131/93
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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - ALGERIA, TURKEY

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Myanmar - 8 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111

Yugoslavia/Kosovo - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 117/126/128

****EJEs and "Disappearances" - 1100 hrs gmt, 20 October**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 124/126/128

Please let Richard at the IS Press Office know which national press you are inviting to the WASHINGTON campaign launch by tomorrow (sorry I didn't make it clear in the last NS). Please remember to keep us up-to-date on media coverage throughout - Torbin in the IS Press Office will be maintaining a continuous evaluation, which will be included in the News Service for your information.

India & Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 126

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Francophone Summit - 11 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111/126

****North Korea - 1600 hrs gmt, 14 October**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88/119/124

The embargo has been changed to 1600 hrs gmt - it is written on the item itself which was sent out in NS 124.

****Afghanistan - 26 October**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 124

News service item on Afghan asylum-seekers at risk of forcible return should be sent to you tomorrow. It includes mentions of Denmark and Canada.

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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News Service 131/93

AI INDEX: MDE 28/WU 04/93
12 OCTOBER 1993

ALGERIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS DELIBERATE KILLINGS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND OTHER CIVILIANS BY ARMED OPPOSITION GROUPS

Amnesty International is concerned at the deliberate killing on 10 October of Djilali Belkhenchir, a 52-year-old human rights activist and paediatrician at the Bir Traria Hospital in Algiers, by three armed men.

Nobody has yet claimed responsibility for his killing, but it appears likely that he was the victim of a deliberate killing by one of the armed opposition groups who are increasingly targeting and killing civilians in Algeria.

Within the last nine months, since the state of emergency was renewed in February, more than 120 civilians have been deliberately killed, apparently by armed Islamic opposition groups. Those killed have included leading intellectuals - journalists, doctors and university lecturers - as well as workers, peasants and local and national state officials. At least 100 members of the security services have also been killed by armed opposition groups; about three hundred suspected sympathizers of armed opposition groups have been killed by government security forces over the same period.

Dr Belkhenchir, a professor at Algiers University and leading member of a national children's rights association, may have been targeted because he was a member of the National Committee to Save Algeria (*Comité national pour la sauvegarde de l'Algérie*). The organization was set up after the Islamic Salvation Front (*Front islamique du salut*, FIS) gained a large majority in the first round of national elections in December 1991, and called for the cancellation of the second round of elections. Dr Belkhenchir was also Vice President of the Algerian Committee Against Torture (*Comité algérien contre la torture*, CACT).

Other civilians who have been killed recently include Rabah Guenzet, a leading member of the Ettahaddi communist party and a philosophy lecturer at Algiers University, who died on 5 October after being found shot in the head; Ahmed Hambail, a professor of Islamic Law at the University of Tizi Ouzou, known to have been a spokesman for moderation and reconciliation, who was shot on 30 September by an armed group wearing hoods; and Abderrahmane Chergou, a writer and former journalist well-known for his opposition to political Islam, who was shot outside his home at Mohammedia on 28 September.

At least six journalists have been among those deliberately killed, including Tahar Djaout, editor of the weekly *Ruptures*, who was shot in the head by armed Islamist militants on 26 May 1993, and Rabah Zenati, a TV journalist, killed outside his parents' home in Algiers on 4 August. At least seven women have also been killed, among them a teacher, Rachida Saheb, who was killed with her husband Mohand Oubélaïd Saheb, both communists, who were killed in front of their three children at their house in Boufarik during the night of 6 July.

Responsibility for such killings is rarely claimed by any armed group, but at least two armed Islamic opposition groups, the Armed Islamic Movement, (*Haraka Islamiya musallaha*, *Mouvement islamique armée*, MIA), and the Armed Islamic Group (*Jama'a Islamiya musallaha*, *Groupe islamique armée*), are believed to have carried out such killings. Other killings may have been carried out independently by local Islamic armed groups or by individuals carrying out private vendettas. However, killings of civilians have been excused by exiled leaders who act as spokespeople for the FIS. Anwar Haddam, leader of the FIS parliamentary delegation in the United States of America, described the killing on 15 June of Mahfoud Boucebcî, a psychiatry professor who had spoken out against sexual and religious taboos, as "a sentence and not a crime".

Amnesty International strongly condemns all deliberate killings of civilians by armed opposition groups and calls for such killings to cease immediately. The deliberate killing of civilians constitutes the ultimate form of human rights abuse which should not be tolerated, whether carried out by governments or by opposition groups aspiring to governmental powers. Amnesty International has also condemned human rights violations committed by the security forces, such as torture and ill-treatment, the use of the death penalty and extrajudicial executions, and has expressed concern about the use of administrative detention and unfair trials, calling on the Algerian Government to take the necessary measures to put an end to all such violations.

Over 1500 people are now thought to have been killed by both sides since the state of emergency was first declared in Algeria in February 1992. An appeal by Amnesty International's Secretary General, Pierre Sané, in Algiers in May this year called on all sectors of civil society to mobilise to demand "an end to political violence, fear and repeated violations".

An urgent appeal was also issued today by Amnesty International following the Algerian Government's execution yesterday of 13 people sentenced to death in trials before special courts which violate international fair trial standards.

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AI INDEX: EUR 44/WU 10/93
12 OCTOBER 1993

ARREST ORDER ISSUED FOR RECEP MARA LI - INCREASED PRESSURE ON PUBLISHERS AND WRITERS DEALING WITH KURDISH ISSUES

Amnesty International has written to the Turkish Justice Minister, Seyfi Oktay, urging for an arrest warrant for Recep Mara_I_, a Kurdish publisher, not to be carried out.

The warrant for Seyfi Oktay's arrest was issued by the Chief Prosecutor of Istanbul State Security Court in September because of statements he made about the situation in southeast Turkey in a television discussion earlier this year.

Recep Mara_I_ was indicted under Article 8/1 of the Anti-Terror Law, which forbids "separatist propaganda" and carries a maximum sentence of five years' imprisonment. Examination of his statements, as recorded in the indictment of 14 September 1993, shows that he made no advocacy of violence. If Recep Mara_I_ were taken into custody, Amnesty International would consider him a prisoner of conscience, held in violation of Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Kurdish publisher Recep Mara_I_ was adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience when he was imprisoned in Turkey from 1982 to 1991 for the expression of his non-violent opinions. In 1984, during a hunger-strike against the horrific conditions in which political prisoners were being held, Recep Mara_I_ was severely beaten, and he has since suffered disturbances of vision and balance. His poor health is an additional factor in Amnesty International's concern at his possible arrest.

Amnesty International has publicised its concern in a number of other cases where writers and publishers are threatened with imprisonment under Article 8 of the Anti-Terror Law for the non-violent expression of their opinions. Do_u Perinçek, publisher and general secretary of the Workers' Party, was sentenced to two years imprisonment for "separatist propaganda" during the election campaign of 1991 but this sentence was overturned by the Appeal Court as being "too lenient". One of the statements for which Do_u Perinçek was indicted was one he gave on a television discussion: "We cannot have unity by force. We can only achieve unity by recognizing and accepting the wishes of the Kurdish people with good will and in a spirit of brotherhood".

Amnesty International has noted an increase in arrests and other proceedings taken against the press and publishing community since June when a briefing was given by military and political figures saying that they intended to pursue "total struggle" against the Kurdish Workers' Party, and calling on the press to report "in a spirit of unanimity" with the government.

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