
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 132/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - AFGHANISTAN, AIUSA LETTER TO EDITORS RE: EJES CAMPAIGN, AIUSA MEDIA ADVISORY RE: EJES CAMPAIGN

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

Nobel Peace Prize: Although we have no position on who wins the prize, we are preparing a for response only news service item on violations in South Africa in case President De Klerk and Nelson Mandela win the prize - if they do, this will be sent out to sections immediately.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Yugoslavia/Kosovo - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 117/126/128
EJEs and "Disappearances" - 1100 hrs gmt, 20 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 131

****USA - 24 November****

News release to go with open letter to President Clinton on death penalty.

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

****Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting - 18 October****

News service item will be sent to sections tomorrow. Press officers in Commonwealth countries are encouraged to try to get coverage/features in national newspapers. (If this works please let us know - thanks.)

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

News service item enclosed.

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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AI INDEX: ASA 11/WU 03/93
EMBARGOED FOR 26 OCTOBER 1993

AFGHANISTAN: HUNDREDS OF AFGHAN ASYLUM-SEEKERS RISK FORCIBLE RETURN

Governments in Europe, North America and other countries appear to be ignoring the appalling human rights situation in Afghanistan and hundreds of Afghan asylum-seekers are at risk of being forcibly returned, said Amnesty International in a report issued today.

At least one Afghan asylum-seeker was forcibly returned to Kabul from Denmark in August - Danish police handed him over to armed guards in Kabul and nothing has been heard of him since. Several other Afghans in Denmark are so afraid of suffering the same fate, they went on hunger strike, literally sewing up their own lips between 6 and 17 September, but some still face deportation. Immigration authorities in other countries, such as Canada, are believed to be currently considering the option to deport Afghan asylum-seekers.

"Many governments are labouring under the illusion that the change of government in Afghanistan has eliminated the risks that Afghan asylum-seekers fear - when in reality new groups have been targeted for arbitrary arrest, home raids, rape and even death," said the organization.

Since the fall of former President Najibullah's government in April 1992 and the subsequent formation of the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the nature of the Afghan civil war has changed, causing new groups of refugees to flee. Fighting between rival Mujahideen groups has spread into towns which were previously unaffected by war and people continue to die almost daily in Kabul and elsewhere. More than half of Kabul's two million inhabitants have fled or been killed during the past year.

Those who have fled include people closely associated with the former government: educated Afghan women in various professional capacities who had been forced to give up their jobs; academics and professionals opposed to the new political system; members of certain ethnic and religious minorities; and ordinary, unarmed civilians fleeing the indiscriminate bombing of their homes and localities.

In one instance in February this year, government troops are said to have taken sides with members of the Sunni party Ittehad-e Islami against members of the Shi'a party Hezb-e Wahdat Islami and killed unarmed Shi'a civilian men in front of their families, raped women and set Shi'a homes on fire.

Many Afghans have fled to neighbouring countries, including Pakistan, where they have joined former Afghan refugees who do not feel safe to return to Afghanistan; others have fled to seek protection in Europe, North America and elsewhere. Some refugee camps in Pakistan are controlled by Mujahideen groups and, in the past, dozens of Afghan academics living there were threatened with death and even killed for advocating an end to the Afghan conflict through dialogue and democracy, reportedly by extreme Mujahideen groups.

Amnesty International is concerned by reports that authorities in a number of other countries may consider sending Afghan asylum-seekers to these camps in Pakistan, where they could risk serious human rights violations on the grounds of past political affiliation, educational background or ethnic origin.

Amnesty International is issuing this report to provide information on the human rights conditions in Afghanistan that have led some Afghans to flee their country, in the hope that this may contribute to a more thorough consideration of Afghan asylum cases.

Amnesty International said that reports that some Afghan peasant families who fled to Pakistan under the former government are now returning home must not be seen as an indication that conditions are generally safe for all Afghan refugees to return to Afghanistan. Amnesty International believes that under the present circumstances, many Afghan asylum-seekers could become the target of serious human rights violations if forcibly returned and governments must take responsibility for protecting them.

• As part of its campaign to end political killings and "disappearances" worldwide, October 1993 - August 1994, Amnesty International is calling on all parties in the conflict in Afghanistan to take urgent steps to end political killings. Such acts are prohibited under international standards even in times of war.

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Dear Editor/Columnist,

On October 20, 1993 Amnesty International will launch what Secretary General Pierre Sané has called the most defining campaign in the organizations' history. *"Lives Behind the Lies: The Campaign Against "Disappearances" and Political Killings."* The first movement-wide theme action in several years, and the first on "disappearances" in over ten years, this campaign will place Amnesty International in the forefront as the only international human rights monitoring group to focus its energy and resources on combatting what has come to be the major threat to human rights in the 1990s.

The supporting report, *Getting Away With Murder: Political Killings and "Disappearances" in the 1990s*, says that people from all walks of life and all regions of the world -- including young children and even babies -- have been deliberately targeted for "disappearance" or death by governments and armed opposition groups.

At the end of the 1980s dramatic political change swept across continents. A "new world order" was announced, promising an era in which governments would be accountable to their people, abide by law, and protect and promote human rights. These turned out to be false promises. Tens of thousands of people are still being murdered every year or made to "disappear" without trace by government agents and armed opposition groups.

The international community has shown itself either unwilling or unable to bring about an end to injustice and brutality. Unless action is taken to stop political killings and "disappearances", the rising tide of carnage could overwhelm the institutions set up to promote international human rights standards after the horrors of the Second World War.

I hope that you will be able to cover this issue and bring public attention to this global phenomena. If you are interested in any specific cases or countries, please call me (direct line + 44 71 413 5560). I would be happy to provide any further information or to schedule an interview for a more in depth look into the "lives behind the lies."

Human rights violations are not inevitable. If we act together, we can create a genuine "new world order" in which basic human rights are a reality for all, rather than a privilege for the few.

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POLITICAL KILLINGS AND "DISAPPEARANCES" CAMPAIGN: MEDIA ADVISORY

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GETTING AWAY WITH MURDER: THE LIVES BEHIND THE LIES
A Campaign to Stop "Disappearances" and Political Killings

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Amnesty International (AI) will launch an unprecedented international campaign on **October 20, 1993, at the National Press Club, Lisagor Room, 8:30 AM.** **"Lives Behind the Lies: The Campaign Against "Disappearances and Political Killings"** is a global action combatting what has come to be one of the greatest threats to human rights in the 1990's.

The supporting report, **Getting Away with Murder: Political Killings and "Disappearances" in the 1990s**, says that people from all walks of life and all regions of the world have been deliberately targeted for "disappearance" or death by governments and armed opposition groups.

Launching the campaign will be --

Pierre Sané, Secretary General, Amnesty International;

Mary Gray, Chair, Board of Directors, AIUSA;

Alicia Partnoy, Vice-Chair of the Board of Directors, AIUSA;

Mahmut Üngören, General Secretary, The Human Rights Foundation of Turkey; and Alenka Mirkovič, Croatian journalist, formerly with Radio Vukovar.

NEWS CONFERENCE
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

"Getting Away With Murder: The Lives Behind the Lies"
A Campaign to Stop "Disappearances" and Political Killings

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 20, 1993

8:30 AM

WHERE:

The National Press Club

Lisagor Room

529 14th St., NW (at F)

13th Flr.

Washington, D.C.

- Video footage available.
- Speakers will be available for individual interviews.