
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 135/93

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 18 OCTOBER 1993

AI INDEX: NWS 11/135/93
DISTR: SC/PO
NO OF WORDS: 2173

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - CHINA, BULGARIA, N.KOREA

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

EJEs and "Disappearances" - 1100 hrs gmt, 20 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 131
USA - 24 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 132
India & Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 126

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting - 18 October - SEE NS 131
Afghanistan - 26 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 124/131/132
Algeria - 28 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 127

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Iran - 17 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

INTERNAL

POLITICAL KILLINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES CAMPAIGN
SECTION LAUNCH INITIATIVES

19 OCTOBER

Italian Section:

12 am. Press briefing in Rome.

Swiss Section:

(Six appeal cases: Colombia, Turkey, Brazil, Philippines, Guatemala and South Africa). Press conference and symbolic action in Berne.

Unveiling of action poster - giant 3m x 2m puzzle with the photos of the cases underneath. Special guest: Mohammed Nadrani from Morocco.

20 OCTOBER

Canadian Section:

Local event in Ottawa. Roger Clark (SG of the section) will launch the report at a demonstration at the Human Rights Monument. There will be two more speakers: Nora Melara-Valera (an AI-member whose husband "disappeared" in Honduras in 1984) and Rose Ndayohoze (her husband, a former minister of information in Burundi, was executed after being dismissed from the government).

Section Canadienne/Francophone:

11 am. News conference with Gabriel Régallet (official spokesman for campaign), Dora Montalvo (mother of "disappeared" Elsa Aurella Aguilar de Lobo) from El Salvador and hopefully Robert Crépeau (lawyer who worked on international board which studied the inquiry into six assassinated Jesuits in El Salvador).

Dutch Section:

(Twelve cases have been selected).

10 am. Press Conference in Hague.

11-12 am. Group of Filipino children, Monique Mujawamaliya from Rwanda and Mohammed Nadrani will hand the campaign report over to a delegation of Parliament. Mohammed Nadrani will signal twelve bill-board cars with paintings of the victims on the roof to start. They will drive to the nine embassies in Hague. Mies Bouhuys (famous woman Dutch writer involved with a support group of Argentine Mothers) will read a poem. Bill-board cars to drive to twelve regions in the Netherlands where they will hand out paper and information about a case to mayors or other VIP's in the region.

In the evening there will be an interview with Mohammed Nadrani and an AI representative on TV.

German Section:

Press conference in Bonn. SG will introduce the theme and it is intended to place 24 shadows of the 24 appeal cases in the conference room.

Israel Section:

(Focusing on cases from: South Africa, Guatemala, Brazil, Tadjhikistan and Myanmar).

Morning press conference with TV and most newspapers invited.

In the afternoon AI members are having an informational meeting and will proceed to the centre of Tel Aviv for a public demonstration.

Signatures will be collected on petitions and postcards and sent to embassies and governments concerned.

Spanish Section:

11.30 am. Press conference in Madrid. Section has prepared 8-page briefing which EDAI published for Spain and Latin America and approximately 5000 are being sent to journalists, politicians, etc. Have also recorded a cassette with statements for radios.

AI INDEX: ASA 17/WU 15/93
18 OCTOBER 1993

CHINA: FORTHCOMING POLITICAL TRIALS IN BEIJING AND OTHER CITIES

A series of major political trials is due to take place soon in China to try at least 30 pro-democracy activists held in Beijing and other cities. They were secretly arrested in 1992 and later accused of forming or joining dissident groups, circulating political leaflets or planning activities around 4 June 1992 to commemorate the third anniversary of the crackdown on the 1989 pro-democracy protests.

Amnesty International raised their cases in a telex to Prime Minister Li Peng on 14 October, calling on the government to release them unconditionally unless they have been charged with recognizably criminal offences in accordance with international standards. The authorities have not disclosed any information about their cases or the forthcoming trials, but unofficial sources report that procedures for their trial started a month ago.

In Beijing, a group of 15 or 16 detained dissidents were charged a few weeks ago with "counter-revolutionary" offences - a euphemism for political "crimes". According to a UPI report of 17 September 1993, relatives of the prisoners were notified in September by the Beijing Intermediate People's Court to find lawyers for their trials. The trials were originally due to start in early October but have been delayed till later this month, some sources said. It is expected that the hearings will be closed to independent observers and foreign journalists, as is the practice in all political trials in China.

Those facing trial in Beijing include 10 people who are reported to have been charged with either "organising", "leading" or "taking part" in "counter-revolutionary groups", and "carrying out counter-revolutionary propaganda". They are: Liu Jingsheng, a worker at the Tong county Machinery Plant near Beijing; Kang Yuchun, a doctor at Beijing's Andingmen Hospital; Chen Wei, a former student of the Beijing's Technology Institute; Hu Shigen (also named as Hu Shengjun) a lecturer at the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute; Wang Guoqi, a former printing worker at the Beijing Languages Institute; Wang Peizhu, Lu Zhigang and Wang Tiancheng, all three from Beijing University; Gao Yuxiang, a private entrepreneur from the Hongqiao Xuanwu district in Beijing; and Chen Qingling, an employee of Tianjin Hangu Saltworks Weather Station. Five others, Zhang Chunzhu, Rui Chaohuai, Xing Hongwei, Li Jinli (or Li Quanli) and Li Guojun, have reportedly been charged with carrying out "counter-revolutionary propaganda". An archaeology student at Beijing University, originally from Henan province, An Ning, is also believed to be among those facing trial.

Most of those named above are known to have been secretly arrested in May or June 1992. They are reported to have been illegally held without charge for about a year. For months after their arrest, relatives were denied access to them and information as to the reason for their detention. According to unconfirmed reports, some were ill-treated in detention.

Others who are believed to face trial are democracy activists who have been detained since 1992 in various provinces. They include Meng Zhongwei, a chemistry student from Zhengzhou University in Henan province, and at least 10 people held since April 1992 in connection with an underground dissident group based in Lanzhou, the provincial capital of Gansu. Some 50 people were reportedly arrested at the time on suspicion of having links with this group, 10 of whom have been identified. They are: Ding Mao, Liu Baiyu and Xing Shimin, philosophy students at Lanzhou University; Lu Yanghua, a postgraduate student from Lanzhou University Physics Department; Liu Wensheng, a history student from Lanzhou University; Gao Changyun, a lecturer at Lanzhou University Administration Department; Zhang Jian, a Gansu Provincial Library worker; Cao Jianyu, a Gansu Association of Public Relations worker; Xu Zhendong, a Urumqi Tianshan Furnace Plant cadre; and Lu Yalin, a Jiangsu Yangcheng Institute of Light Industry teacher.

The names of others detained in 1992 in Anhui and Hunan provinces are known, though little has been heard about them after their arrest.

In its appeal to Prime Minister Li Peng, Amnesty International expressed concern that all those named are reported to be held solely for the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression or association, in violation of international human rights standards.

The organisation called upon the government to release them unconditionally unless they have been charged with recognizably criminal offences, in accordance with international standards. It urged that, if the trials go ahead, they be granted fair and open trials, with full facilities to defend themselves, and that independent observers be allowed to attend the hearings. It also urged the authorities to make public the names of and charges against all those to be tried, as well as the dates and places of the trials.

ENDS/

AI INDEX: EUR 15/WU 01/93
18 OCTOBER 1993

BULGARIA: CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTORS MAY BE PROSECUTED AND IMPRISONED FOR EVASION OF MILITARY SERVICE

Amnesty International wrote to President Zhelyu Zhelev of Bulgaria on 14 October, expressing concern about reports that conscientious objectors to military service in Bulgaria might be prosecuted and imprisoned for evasion of military service.

According to an article published in *24 Hours* on 1 October, General Luben Pandev, from the General Staff of the Armed Forces, stated that 5,883 men did not report to conscription boards for induction in 1993. He also stated that 271 men had been reported to the public prosecutors for evasion of military service. One person reportedly had already been tried on this charge and given a suspended sentence of six months' imprisonment.

Amnesty International was recently informed that some of the men who did not appear before the conscription boards were absent because of their conscientious objection to military service. Should any conscientious objectors to military service be charged and imprisoned for evasion of military service under Article 361 of the Penal Code, Amnesty International would consider them prisoners of conscience.

Although the right to perform an alternative service is recognized by the Bulgarian Constitution (Article 59 paragraph 2), there is no law in Bulgaria which would enable conscientious objectors to duly address their requests to perform an alternative service to the competent authorities. Prosecution of conscientious objectors for evasion of military service would thus represent a violation of their constitutional right to an alternative service.

In September 1992 Amnesty International wrote to the then Minister of Defence Aleksandur Staliyski concerning a draft law on military service which the National Assembly has not yet adopted. Amnesty International was concerned that the provisions of the new law on military service for alternative service should be in accordance with relevant international standards. The organization also asked to be informed of the content and current status of the draft law on military service, but did not receive a reply.

Amnesty International urged the President to exercise his constitutional prerogative and to address the National Assembly on the need to adopt a law on alternative service for those who have conscientious objections to performing military service. Amnesty International also urged him, as the Commander in Chief of the Bulgarian Armed Forces, to stop all prosecution for evasion of military service on the grounds of conscientious objection until such a law has been adopted.

ENDS/

AI INDEX: ASA 24/WU 02/93
18 OCTOBER 1993

NORTH KOREA: GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT

The authorities of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have sent a letter commenting on an Amnesty International report, North Korea: Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns, published on 14 October.

Amnesty International appreciates the response to its report by the Government of the DPRK and hopes it signals a willingness on the part of the government to engage in further discussion on human rights. However, the organization regrets that the authorities have failed to address the cases of prisoners of conscience named by Amnesty International. While the government's letter "categorically rejects" the information in Amnesty International's report as "either utterly groundless or far from the fact", Amnesty International notes that the letter actually confirms some of the information given in its report, including the use of public executions.

The government's letter denies Amnesty International's report that employees at two foreign trade organizations had been detained in March 1993 and accused of spying. However, it indicates that joint venture companies had been investigated in 1992 and 1993 and that the former vice president of the Korea Joint Venture Bank had been tried in March 1993 for embezzlement. The letter does not indicate what sentence he received.

Concerning reports of the detention of workers at North Korean-administered logging camps in the Russian far East, the letter states that "there is no 'prison' but only education rooms" which are "intended to give knowledge about the Russian laws to those workers who were taken on charges of violation of the laws and handed over to our side". The letter states that "there is no criminal punishment inflicted on the violators" but that "security" personnel "educate workers to properly observe the Russian laws". Despite these denials, Amnesty International remains concerned that places of detention exist in logging camps and have been used to hold North Korean workers without judicial supervision, apparently for "education".

The government's letter gives the name of a man who was tried for murder and "publicly executed in November [1992] at the request of the crowd", thus confirming reports from unofficial sources mentioned by Amnesty International. It also states that articles of the Criminal Law containing provisions on "crimes against the state", which Amnesty International believes are vaguely worded and open to wide interpretation, have "crime-preventive significance and are rarely applied". However, in the absence of indications of how they have been applied, Amnesty International remains concerned that people may be convicted and imprisoned under these articles for the mere peaceful exercise of fundamental rights.

Amnesty International is renewing its call on the North Korean authorities to implement its recommendations, including by releasing all prisoners of conscience and ending public executions, and by allowing international human rights organizations to visit the country and investigate human rights concerns.

The full text of the DPRK Government's response to Amnesty International's report is available from Amnesty International, (AI Index: ASA 24/06/93).

ENDS/