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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 140/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - SOMALIA

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

**PLEASE NOTE:** The enclosed item on Somalia is today being sent to international media by the IS Press Office.

**PLEASE NOTE:** We are still urgently awaiting brief evaluations from you on media coverage of the EJE's campaign launch. Please send a quick note describing: whether coverage in your country was good; which major tv/radio/newspapers covered the story; what worked well (eg. press conference/event/offering interviews with victims/etc.). Over the next few weeks we would appreciate more comprehensive evaluations, but the urgent need is for a quick overview from your perspective (by Monday). Thanks, Paula.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

USA - 24 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 132  
Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137  
India - 15 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137  
Iran - 17 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138  
Venezuela - 10 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 121

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Algeria - 28 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 127/138  
Papua New Guinea - 19 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138  
Human Rights Day Speech - 8 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138

## FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

1994  
Tunisia - 12 January  
South Africa - 19 January  
Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56-57/93

## INTERNAL

### International art exhibition - Prince George, Canada

Please pass on the following message to your members: The Prince George AI group in Canada is planning an art exhibition which will illustrate the effectiveness, scope and power of AI's network. Please draw or create a letter, in any visual medium, which can be mailed or faxed for display at this exhibition. Your "letter" should express human rights abuses and/or victories occurring in your area of the world. The intent of this art show is to receive as many entries from as many different areas of the world as possible. All entries will be for sale to raise money for AI work. The exhibition runs from February 15, 1994 to April 3, 1994 at a local gallery. Depending on the response received, the exhibition could be toured either nationally and/or internationally. All entries should be mailed before January 15, 1994 and entries that are going to be faxed should be sent between February 8 - 21, 1994. Following is the mailing address for entries: Amnesty International Art Exhibition, c/o Other Art Inc, 1148 7th Avenue, Prince George, B.C., V2L 3J3, Canada. Fax:(604) 561 1553. Contacts: Marty Kranabetter - (604) 564 2773 or mkranabe@mfor01.for.gov.bc.ca OR Derek Masselink - (604) 564 4885 or dmasselink@galaxy.gov.bc.ca

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### POLITICAL KILLINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES CAMPAIGN SECTION "LAUNCH-WEEK" INITIATIVES

#### **15 OCTOBER**

Belgian Section: The Amnesty-berge set sail on the Flemish rivers and canals for a month, planning to stop in 13 places where there will be events and information. In the morning a major radio-newsmagazine reported live from the boat about the campaign. 11 am. A press conference on board.

#### **19 OCTOBER**

International Secretariat: Interviews - Head of Africa RD: BBC WS French to Africa service; Head of Americas RD: BBC WS Latin America service.

#### **20 OCTOBER**

British Section: At 9.45 am an old-fashioned horse-drawn hearse followed by mourners went from the British Section's office to the South African Embassy. There a wreath was laid down for the South African case Bheki Mlangeni and David Bull, Director of the British Section, had a meeting with representatives from the Embassy. The Section was disappointed with the small amount media coverage in Britain.

Iceland Section: Press conference with all the newspapers invited. Both TV-stations covered the press conference in their news and radio stations covered it with long interviews.

International Secretariat: Interviews - Head of Asia/Pacific RD: Deutschwelle Asian service; Head of Africa RD: Voice of America, Africa Service, Network on Africa, Radio 702 Johannesburg; Richard - Media coordinator: Voice of America, BBC WS for language service, RFI English service; Anna - Press officer: Radio Netherlands English service, BBC WS TV, Washington News Network, AP Radio, CBS radio, NBC radio, BBC WS Hungarian service; Researcher on Indonesia: BBC WS Dateline East Asia, BBC WS Indonesia service; Pierre Sané - Secretary General: BBC WS Newshour;

Alenka (Radio Vukovar, colleague of the cases from Vukovar) & Brian (Campaign Coordinator): BBC WS Outlook; Head of Middle East RD: BBC WS Arabic service; GENERAL: World Tonight Canada (done in US).

Irish Section: 11.30 am. Launch at the Irish Film Centre. Philip King sang a song about political killing and two poems by Chilean poet Marjorie Agosin were read by actress Susan Fitzgerald and poet Paula Meehan. The backdrop was made up of thousands of cards signed by people from all over Ireland demanding human rights. A photographic display and highlighted cases tried to get behind the anonymous statistics and convey the suffering of the individuals.

Italian Section: Press conference in the morning (changed from 19 October). 25 journalists attended and speakers were Antonio Marchesi (Chairperson, Italian SC), Irene Bertolotti (campaign coordinator), Tina Meschiati (an Argentinean woman disappeared from 1977-79) and Riccardo Noury (press officer). In the evening Videomusic, a big private TV channel, broadcast several interviews and the ENR. Interviews were also given to Vatican Radio and the Italian Program of Swiss International Radio.

#### **21 OCTOBER**

**International Secretariat: Interviews - Head of Africa RD: Channel Africa Radio, Johannesburg; Alenka/Brian: CNN**

**POLITICAL KILLINGS AND DISAPPEARANCES CAMPAIGN SECTION INITIATIVES - END WEEK 42 & WEEK 43**

**23 OCTOBER**

**Canadian Section: (Focusing on the cases from Israel and the Occupied Territories, South Africa, Brazil, Guatemala, Indonesia and Bosnia-Herzegovina). The AI groups in Ottawa are having a "write-a-thon" and march to the Human Rights Monument.**

**25-30 OCTOBER**

**Italian Section: Presentation of the campaign and its report in over 50 bookshops in the main cities.**

**31 OCTOBER**

**Belgian Section: "Campaign day" in Gent featuring: Filipino theatre group; debate on "can violence save the world?"; and performance by 12 famous Flemings who will evoke the 12 cases used in the first part of the Belgian campaign. Nora Lopez will speak about the situation in Honduras.**

**"END/LAST WEEK OF OCTOBER"**

**French Section: Publication of "March 17th, Ciudad Guatemala" - a book for 12-15-year-olds about a disappeared family, based on a true story.**

**Italian Section: Advertisements in main newspapers.**

AI INDEX: AFR 52/WU 03/93  
28 OCTOBER 1993

**SOMALIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED ABOUT DETENTIONS AND KILLINGS BY UNITED NATIONS TROOPS**

Amnesty International is concerned about reports of detentions and the use of lethal force by United Nations (UN) troops in Somalia against civilians, in breach of international human rights and humanitarian law standards.

Hundreds of Somalis have been detained for short periods by members of the multi-national UN force since the launch of the UNOSOM II operation in May 1993. Most of them were released after days or weeks in custody but some 400 alleged criminals have been transferred to the custody of the new Somali police force for processing by the recently re-established Somali courts. About 70 Somali political detainees are still in UN custody without charge or trial, mostly in the central UN detention facility in the former US embassy. At least one of them has been detained now for about two months.

The detainees include about 20 political leaders of the Somali National Alliance (SNA) headed by General Mohamed Farah Aideed, who were arrested by US troops in early October, as well as others captured in previous weeks. According to reports, the detainees have been denied access to relatives, although the International Committee of the Red Cross has been allowed to visit them. Their legal status is undefined: none has been charged with any offence, brought before any kind of court or allowed access to a lawyer. A UN spokesperson said they were being held in "preventive custody" for security reasons.

Said Amnesty International: "We are concerned about these detainees as the UN hasn't said precisely why they are detained, on what legal basis, or when they will be either charged with a criminal offence or freed. At the moment, it seems clear that their basic rights are not being respected by the UN. The UN's own standards affirm that they should be allowed access to their families and due process of law, including access to a lawyer, review of their detention and the benefit of fair trial if they are to be charged with an offence. We urge the UN to be open about these detainees - it would be dangerous indeed for the UN to set a precedent by allowing its own personnel to detain people arbitrarily and indefinitely without charge or trial."

Amnesty International deplores the heavy loss of life during this latest phase of the UN operation in Somalia, which began in May 1993. Several hundred Somalis, including many women and children, have been killed, as have over 60 UN troops and 18 USA servicemen. Some of the civilians killed by UN or USA troops seem to have been victims of the use of lethal force in breach of their human rights and humanitarian law obligations.

Amnesty International has already written to the UN and to the Canadian, Pakistani and Belgian governments, which all have forces in Somalia, about killings of Somali civilians by UN troops. Amnesty International is also looking into two incidents involving USA troops outside the UN command structure. On 12 July, USA forces killed dozens of unarmed civilians, including Somali elders whom the UN was negotiating with, in an attack on what was supposed to be General Aideed's command post. And on 3 October, over 700 Somalis were wounded (about a third of whom were women and children), and 18 US troops and an unknown number of Somalis killed, in gun battles in a US military operation to arrest SNA leaders.

"In recent months the military objective of arresting General Aideed on suspicion of being responsible for the killing of 25 Pakistani UN troops on 5 June has overshadowed the humanitarian side of the UNOSOM II operation. This has obscured what was achieved in ending the famine, improving security in most areas outside southern Mogadishu, and establishing new local administrative, police and judicial structures," said Amnesty International. "In the northwest, the self-declared Somaliland Republic administration has itself improved security in the area, creating opportunities for reconstruction and establishing human rights protection."

**"Obviously the situation in Somalia is tense," said Amnesty International, "and the role of the UN forces is very difficult in this unprecedented UN operation. But we are urgently calling on the UN to fulfil its obligations as the world's human rights standard-bearer to carry out thorough, prompt and impartial investigations into these killings and to find out and publicly report if there have been violations of international human rights standards."**

**Gross and widespread human rights abuses have been committed by several of the armed Somali groups which emerged in January 1991 at the end of the brutal 21-year dictatorship of President Mohamed Siad Barre. Both before and during the present military conflict with the UN forces which developed in June 1993, General Aideed's force has been responsible for major human rights abuses against members of opposing clans or sub-clans, as well as the killings of UN troops, and summary killings of Somalis suspected of informing for the UN. Pro-Aideed mobs killed four foreign journalists taken to witness civilian deaths caused by a US raid on 12 July, and abused the bodies of US troops killed on 3 October. General Aideed's forces mistreated two military captives - a Nigerian UN soldier and an American helicopter pilot, before he released them on 14 October.**

**At the moment, a ceasefire is holding, giving all sides a chance to review their options. Amnesty International is calling on all parties - UNOSOM II and the armed Somali groups - to put human rights for Somalia high on their agendas and, in particular, to ensure they respect human rights and basic humanitarian law obligations.**

**ENDS/**