
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 148/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - PAPUA NEW GUINEA, UNITED KINGDOM
INTERNAL - PAPUA NEW GUINEA

PLEASE NOTE: The enclosed item on the UK is to go with document, UK: Unlawful killing of detained asylum-seeker Omasese Lumumba, AI Index: EUR 45/13/93. This will be sent out in next week's weekly mailing, however if you urgently need it before then, please contact the IS Press Office.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

****Venezuela - 10 November**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 121

Please note: The report launch will be in Venezuela on 10 November, 10.00am (Venezuela time) at El Atereo, Piso 2, Sala 3, Caracas. Speakers will be: Morris Tidball (AI Researcher); Javier Zuniga (Head of Americas Research); Jose Antonio Martin Pallin (Member of Supreme Court of Spain & AI delegate); AI Venezuela representative; Hipolito Landa Torres (father of Luis Enrique Landa Diaz - EJE victim and one of 24 cases of Political killings and Disappearances campaign).

****Iran - 17 November**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138

Correction to news release: Paragraph 5, end of first sentence should read: "...in Berlin in September 1992.." (NOT May 1992).

****USA - POSTPONED****

Please note this item is postponed until early next year. Apologies for late notice.

Pakistan - 7 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137

India - 15 December - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

United Nations - 17 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 147

****Papua New Guinea - 19 November**** - SEE NEWS SERVICE 138

Item enclosed.

Human Rights Day Speech - 9 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

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News Service 148/93

AI INDEX: ASA 34/WU 02/93
EMBARGOED FOR 19 NOVEMBER 1993

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: TORTURE AND KILLING CONTINUE ON BOUGAINVILLE - GOVERNMENT TURNS A BLIND EYE

Government troops are murdering and torturing suspected opponents on the island of Bougainville - and Papua New Guinea's government is doing little or nothing to stop them, says Amnesty International.

In a report released today, Amnesty International said there is mounting evidence of murder and torture by government and government-backed forces on the island, during the four-year conflict between the government and the secessionist Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA). BRA members have also reportedly committed serious human rights abuses, including summary executions, torture and rape.

But since Bougainville has been practically sealed off by the military, the violations are all but hidden from the world. "Troops and local military-backed "resistance" forces have been virtually free from public scrutiny," said the organization, "and the government itself turns a blind eye. A climate of impunity has prevailed throughout the armed conflict - this must stop if we are ever to see an end to the serious human rights violations being committed there."

The conflict first erupted in 1989 and continued until early 1990 when government troops were forced to withdraw. Amnesty International had documented serious human rights violations during that period and warned that if troops returned to Bougainville, further abuses were likely to occur. Troops did return to the island in early 1991 and since then there have been persistent reports of extrajudicial executions, torture, rape, beatings and harassment of people accused of being BRA supporters. Many of the victims have been civilians with no involvement in the conflict.

Since 1991, at least 60 people, possibly many more, are reported to have been extrajudicially executed by soldiers or members of so-called "resistance" forces, some after being beaten or cut with knives. Others have been tied to the backs of trucks and dragged along the road before being shot and killed. Dozens of people have reportedly been subjected to beatings and torture, including having their fingers or toes cut off, or being burned with lighted cigarettes.

Dozens of people, including elderly people and young children, have reported being fired at with high-powered weapons from the air or from patrol boats. Some of the shootings have resulted in deaths, but these tactics also appear to have been intended simply to terrify civilians and to force them to accept central government and military authority.

The Papua New Guinea government has claimed that it has investigated alleged human rights violations by its troops and punished those responsible. But the findings of any investigations that have been undertaken have never been made public and there has been little evidence of judicial or disciplinary proceedings against soldiers suspected of human rights abuse.

The United Nations has begun to recognize the gravity of the human rights situation in Bougainville and has passed two resolutions calling on the government to permit international access to Bougainville for human rights fact-finding - but nothing has come of this up to now.

Even more disturbing, the actions of other governments may also have exacerbated the human rights problems on Bougainville. Despite evidence of Australian-supplied Iroquois helicopters being used to commit grave human rights violations such as firing upon civilians, the Government of Australia has since supplied a further helicopter to the Papua New Guinea security forces.

The helicopters were supplied on condition they were used only for logistical support and surveillance - yet it remains unclear whether the helicopters have been withdrawn from service on Bougainville. Amnesty International urges the Australian Government to halt any further provision of helicopters and to conduct a thorough review of all military aid to the government of Papua New Guinea.

BRA members have also reportedly committed serious human rights abuses, including summary executions of those accused of "betraying" the independence movement, the torture of civilians living in government-controlled camps known as care centres; and the rape of women accused of being in contact with government troops. Amnesty International condemns these abuses unreservedly. It calls upon the BRA to cease arbitrary killing and torture and to abide by the principles of international humanitarian law.

ENDS/

AI INDEX: EUR 45/WU 06/93
8 NOVEMBER 1993

UNITED KINGDOM: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED BY UNLAWFUL KILLING OF ASYLUM-SEEKER IN PENTONVILLE PRISON

Amnesty International has published a paper detailing its concern about the death of Zairian asylum-seeker Omasese Lumumba while he was detained in Pentonville Prison, the United Kingdom, in 1991. In July 1993, an inquest jury found that he was unlawfully killed by prison staff at Pentonville Prison as a result of "use of improper methods and excessive force in the process of control and restraint".

Omasese Lumumba was the nephew of Patrice Lumumba, the first elected Prime Minister of what is now Zaire, who was assassinated in 1961 shortly after Zaire gained independence from Belgium. Omasese Lumumba fled Zaire after being detained for eighteen months and ill-treated. He spent 10 years in Switzerland and came to England seeking asylum in September 1991.

He was killed on 8 October 1991, in a cell in the segregation unit of Pentonville Prison where he had been taken to after he had refused to move while being escorted to the prison hospital. Six to eight prison officers entered the segregation unit cell and ordered him to lie down on the floor. They proceeded to pin down his arms, legs and head and began to strip him of his clothes, though no prison regulation authorized this. Omasese Lumumba died during a 10-15 minute struggle to forcibly remove his clothing. According to the prison doctor, the prison officers continued to restrain him even after his body had gone limp.

To date, none of the prison staff have been charged with a criminal offence or subject to disciplinary proceedings.

Omasese Lumumba was detained on 15 September 1991, on the decision of an Immigration Officer, which was later approved by the Home Office Asylum Division. He was held for four days in a cell at the Catford Police station, and then transferred to Pentonville Prison. From 19 September 1991 until his death he was locked in a cell for more than 20 hours a day. He was allowed out of the cell each day only to collect two meals and for a 30-minute period of exercise. Other prisoners and prison staff stated that he was depressed and anxious: he rarely ate and he was often seen holding his head in his hands, repeating over and over again in French that he did not understand why he was being held in prison.

When a person is charged with a crime in the United Kingdom, a decision to detain them is reviewed by a court, as is the question of release on bail. However, as he was an asylum-seeker, there was no substantive judicial review of the decision to detain Omasese Lumumba, and as he had entered the United Kingdom without authorization and was not charged with a crime, he did not have the right to seek bail.

Amnesty International believes that Omasese Lumumba's story illustrates serious deficiencies in the procedures applied to asylum-seekers in the United Kingdom. The organization has urged the government to initiate an independent and impartial public inquiry into the death in custody of Omasese which would also examine broader issues concerning the use of force and restraint on imprisoned and detained people. The organization has also called on the government to make specific revisions of asylum procedures to ensure that all asylum-seekers, including those who are detained, are treated in accordance with international standards.

ENDS/

PAPUA NEW GUINEA: "UNDER THE BARREL OF A GUN" - BOUGAINVILLE 1991 TO 1993
(ASA 34/05/93)

ADVICE TO PRESS OFFICERS

A sentence on page 27 of the above report, which discusses the involvement of Australian supplied helicopters in the conflict on Bougainville, inadvertently goes beyond current AI policy for military, security and police (MSP) transfers. We apologize for the fact that the wording of the text is ambiguous and may therefore cause confusion among journalists and the general public.

This note provides clarification and offers the following advice to press officers for dealing with press inquiries about Bougainville:

The sentence in question appears on page 27 of the report and reads as follows:

"Amnesty International urges the Government of Australia to halt any further provision of helicopters to the PNGDF and to conduct an immediate review of all military aid to the Government of Papua New Guinea. It recommends that such aid be suspended until the PNG authorities have conducted a thorough investigation of allegations that the helicopters have been used to commit human rights violations and have made the results of that investigation available to the Australian Government and to the general public."

Press officers are asked to be aware that the underlined passage is intended to refer only to the suspension of military aid which is found to be directly implicated in the commission of human rights violations. It should not be taken to mean that all Australian military aid to PNG should be suspended. AI is calling on the Australian Government to halt any further provision of helicopters to the PNG government, in view of the evidence that Australian-supplied helicopters have been used directly in the commission of human rights violations. It is also calling for a review of all Australian military aid to PNG because of the possibility that other Australian aid may also be implicated in the commission of human rights abuse.

The following points may be useful for those giving media interviews:

1/ Those wishing to refer to Australian Government responsibility with respect to the Bougainville conflict should emphasize the substantive evidence of misuse of Australian-supplied helicopters (described on page 26) and the Australian Government's continued failure to respond adequately to this evidence (pp 26 and 27). You should emphasize what AI is asking the Australian Government to do - not to provide any further helicopters to the PNG government and to conduct a review of all military aid to PNG.

2/ Attention should not be drawn unnecessarily to the ambiguous phrase. It may be borne in mind that (with the possible exception of Australia) the international media will not be fully acquainted with, or interested in, AI's MSP policies.

3/ If journalists ask specific questions about what AI is demanding of the Australian Government, press officers may clarify any confusion and use the opportunity to re-focus attention on the issue of the helicopters, and the evidence that they have been used: a) to dump at sea the bodies of victims of extrajudicial execution; and b) as gunships to fire upon civilians.

You should emphasize that despite this evidence, which was first brought to their attention in 1991, the Australian Government appears to have permitted use of helicopters on Bougainville to continue. It has also failed to insist upon a full and proper investigation of the alleged misuse of the helicopters, indicating that it is prepared to disregard human rights violations on Bougainville.

4/ Questions about Australian Government responsibility should be treated as a point of entry for discussion of the broader picture of human rights violations on Bougainville, and in particular to the general climate of impunity which has apparently prevailed on the island. It can be pointed out that failure to investigate the alleged misuse of Australian helicopters is but one aspect of a broader picture, in which both the PNG Government and the international community, have "turned a blind eye" to evidence of continuing extrajudicial executions and other violations (see press release).

5/ The issue of the helicopters also illustrates the very serious inadequacies of the PNG Government response to human rights violations on Bougainville. the PNG Government has not made available the results of any investigation into alleged misuse of the helicopters. This failure to respond is characteristic of its general attitude toward reports of human rights violations on Bougainville. The PNG government has frequently stated that allegations of violations have been investigated and those found responsible punished. But the findings of investigations have not been published and there has been little evidence of disciplinary or judicial proceedings against soldiers suspected of abuses.

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