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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 233/94

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 7 OCTOBER 1994

AI INDEX: NWS 11/233/94  
DISTR: SC/PO

NO OF WORDS:1180

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **SOUTH KOREA** (for response only), **PHILIPPINES** (this item is being sent to media by the research team), **NAATI** (this is being sent to international wire agencies by the IS press office)

**PLEASE NOTE:** The Rwanda document (see news schedule below) has gone out in a swiftair mailing to press officers today.

## INTERNAL

### **INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES**

France - 0001 hrs GMT 12 October - PLEASE NOTE EXACT EMBARGO TIME SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Rwanda - 14 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 230/94

Burundi - 21 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 230/94

Algeria - 25 October - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

APEC - 3 November -SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

Iraq - 29 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

### **TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES**

\*\* Turkey - 24 OCTOBER \*\* - PLEASE NOTE NEW EMBARGO DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

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**AI INDEX: ASA 25/WU 06/94  
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**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION VISITS SOUTH KOREA**

**An Amnesty International delegation will be visiting South Korea from 9 to 25 October to investigate political imprisonment, ill-treatment and the death penalty in that country.**

**Two members of the delegation are from Amnesty International's International Secretariat in London, while the third delegate is a member of the organization's Japanese Section.**

**The delegation will seek meetings with a wide range of people including human rights activists, lawyers, journalists, legal specialists and politicians from across the political spectrum. They will also seek meetings with officials in the Ministry of Justice, the police, the Agency for National Security Planning, and other relevant authorities.**

**The delegation will be carrying out research into specific reports of human rights violations, including:**

- The large numbers of arrests under the National Security Law which have been carried out in recent months. Some of those detained are prisoners of conscience.**
- Reports of ill-treatment by the police and the Agency for National Security Planning, and procedures followed by these bodies to ensure that prisoners are protected from torture and ill-treatment.**
- The use of the death penalty and the treatment of prisoners awaiting execution. Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally and deeply regrets the execution of 15 prisoners on 6 October.**

**The delegation will also be seeking information about government procedures relating to the full range of Amnesty International's human rights concerns in South Korea, including:**

- The National Security Law which, in its current form, may be used to detain and imprison people for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and association.**
- Any proposals made by the relevant authorities regarding judicial reform; particularly information about any proposal to reform arrest and detention procedures, to improve safeguards against torture and ill-treatment, to reinforce the independence of the judiciary and the accessibility of complaints procedure to members of the public who allege that their rights may have been violated.**
- New information about procedures to protect suspects from ill-treatment at the time of arrest and during questioning, and further information on trial procedures in death penalty case, and on procedures for the granting of pardons or commutations of death sentences.**
- Any proposals to redress human rights violations which occurred under previous governments. Of particular concern is the fate of a number of long-term political prisoners who appear to have been convicted during the 1970s and 1980s after trials which did not conform to international standards, and are currently serving long terms of imprisonment.**

**- Information about any human rights education programs for security forces, including the Police and the Agency for National Security Planning.**

**- Information on matters relating to legislation on the protection and refugee determination procedures for asylum-seekers.**

**Amnesty International will also be inquiring into the intentions of the Government of the Republic of Korea concerning the ratification of international human rights treaties, particularly the UN Convention Against Torture and Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment.**

**ENDS\**

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**AI INDEX: ASA 35/WU 01/94  
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**PHILIPPINES: DEATH PENALTY - AT LEAST SEVEN PEOPLE SENTENCED TO DEATH  
IN SIX MONTHS**

Earlier this month a British national was arrested in the Philippines and charged with heroin possession, joining several foreigners charged with drug offenses who may face the death penalty if convicted.

Much international media attention has been focused on the plight of these foreigners, who include individuals from Australia, Germany, Japan, Switzerland and the United States of America. However, Amnesty International points out that the fate of the many Filipinos already on death row has gone largely unnoticed.

At least seven Filipinos have been sentenced to death in the last six months. The first was Fernando Galera, convicted of rape and robbery. The six others are:

- Elpidio Mercado and Aurelio Acebron, two policemen convicted of kidnapping and killing a 17-year-old boy;
- Salvador Salarsa, convicted of raping a tourist;
- Arnel Alicando, convicted of the rape and murder of a four-year-old girl;
- Pablito Andan, convicted of the rape and murder of his niece;
- A school teacher, whose name is not known to Amnesty International, convicted of the rape of a 17-year-old girl.

"We oppose the death penalty under any circumstances, it is the ultimate form of cruel punishment and a violation of the most basic of human rights - the right to life," Amnesty International said.

The Philippine government reintroduced the death penalty for "heinous" crimes in December last year in an effort to reduce the crime rate. The thirteen crimes punishable by death range from embezzlement to drug-smuggling and murder. Since its reintroduction, the death penalty has been handed down most frequently for crimes of rape and murder.

"Although many governments argue that the death penalty deters violent criminals, evidence indicates this is not the case," Amnesty International said. "Crime rates in countries where the death penalty is in force do not fall and those who are executed are all too frequently poor people or members of disadvantaged minorities".

Amnesty International is strongly urging the Philippine Government to abolish the death penalty for all crimes and to commute the sentences of all those currently on death row.

**ENDS\**

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**HAITI: HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS SHOULD NOT ESCAPE PROSECUTION UNDER AMNESTY**

**Amnesty International today expressed concern at the law reportedly passed on 6 October by Haiti's lower house, authorising President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to grant a "political" amnesty to military leaders responsible for the September 1991 coup which overthrew his democratically elected government.**

**"The measure could open the way for those responsible for massive human rights violations carried out during the coup and afterwards to enjoy impunity for their crimes," Amnesty International said.**

**The Haitian Senate is still to consider the measure, while President Aristide would apparently determine who is to be covered by the law and what period of time the law would cover. Amnesty International urged both the Senate and President Aristide to ensure that anyone responsible for human rights violations is brought to justice.**

**To allow any such persons to escape prosecution shows a blatant disregard for the victims and their relatives, and for well-established principles of international law. Amnesty International's experience over many years and in many countries also has shown that allowing such impunity would lay a dangerous foundation for national reconciliation and the protection of human rights.**

**ENDS\**