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INTERNAL

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **ALGERIA** (See news schedule below)

FFAI PLEASE NOTE: The enclosed item on Algeria is for priority translation. Please could you send me the translated text as soon as it is ready. Thanks - Dina S.

PLEASE NOTE: There is a Rwanda ENR to accompany the document and news release on RPF abuses. If you are interested in receiving copies of this please contact Anne Jenkins at the IS (tel: 010 44 71 413 5585) with your order. Please also inform Anne if you are interested in receiving copies of the first Rwanda ENR produced for the press conference in London on 19 August to mark the return of the mission.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

** Rwanda - 20 October ** - PLEASE NOTE NEW EMBARGO DATE, SEE NEWS SERVICE 234/94

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 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

News Service 239/94

AI INDEX: MDE 28/WU 04/94

EMBARGOED FOR 0001 hrs GMT 25 OCTOBER 1994

ALGERIA: CIVILIANS TARGETED BY GOVERNMENT FORCES AND ARMED ISLAMIST GROUPS

Government forces and armed Islamist groups have brutally killed thousands of Algerian civilians who are trapped in the escalating arbitrary violence and those killings are continuing every day.

"Algeria's security forces kill civilians as an alternative to arrest or in retaliation for ambushes and attacks by armed groups," according to an Amnesty International report published today on human rights violations in the country.

Armed Islamist groups, such as the *Groupe Islamique Armé* GIA (Armed Islamic Group) and the *Mouvement Islamique Armé* MIA (Armed Islamic Movement), are also deliberately and arbitrarily killing hundreds of civilians, targeting those who oppose their political agenda, Amnesty International said. Their victims include journalists and intellectuals, civil servants, magistrates, women and foreigners.

"We are appealing to the Algerian authorities to commit themselves to ending the bloody carnage and torture wreaked by their security forces," the human rights organization said. "We also urge the leaders of the *Front Islamique de Salut* FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) to call on the armed Islamist groups to end the killings of civilians."

Amnesty International has received reports that security forces have extrajudicially executed hundreds of civilians, although the Algerian authorities claim all those killed were involved in armed clashes. Eyewitnesses say victims were sometimes killed in or near their homes, in front of families and neighbours. Others were arrested and tortured to death or otherwise killed in custody.

Government security forces reportedly killed scores of unarmed civilians in a suburb of Algiers in April, May, July and August 1994, following attacks by armed groups on security forces. Eyewitnesses to one incident say at least 20 people were shot dead outside their homes by security forces on 16 August, reportedly after an armed Islamist group ambushed two army vehicles. Among those killed was **Fatah Mizreb**, an 18-year-old high school student shot dead when he opened the door of his house to go out.

In another case, on 12 March 1994 nine students and their teacher were arrested by security forces after returning home on leave from their training course. Families of the detained were told by the *gendarmérie* that their sons would be let go soon. A month later, they were told all the detainees had been released but immediately killed by "terrorists." The coffins picked up by the relatives were sealed, but some families opened them to find bruises and wounds on the bodies.

Torture, a crime virtually eliminated in Algeria between 1989 and 1991, has become widespread in Algeria's police and *gendarmérie* stations and military security centres. Methods of torture include the "*chiffon*", in which torturers tie a detainee to a bench, stuff a cloth into his mouth and pour in large quantities of dirty water mixed with detergent or chemicals. Other techniques include electric shocks,

burning with blowtorches, sexual abuse with bottles and sticks, and even drilling holes in the back, feet or legs.

Judges in Algeria's special courts accept confessions extracted from detainees under torture and fail to investigate allegations, Amnesty International said. To date, the Algerian authorities have not given Amnesty International details of a single investigation into the numerous reports of torture, deaths in custody and extrajudicial executions raised by the organization.

Said Moulay, a university professor of mathematics, reported that he was tortured with the *chiffon* method, beaten with rubber hoses and sticks, kicked and punched during secret detention in June and July 1994. Torture occurs during such *garde à vue* detention, which is often illegally prolonged beyond the maximum 12-day period permitted by Algerian law.

"The Algerian Government has got to stop its security forces from torturing and ill-treating detainees, as well as the outright murders they commit," Amnesty International said. "Likewise, leaders of FIS should condemn the killings by armed Islamist groups, rather than try to justify certain killings as legitimate by claiming that those targeted for death by the armed groups are 'not innocent'."

Armed Islamist groups have killed hundreds of civilians. They have taken hostages and threatened thousands with death. Among those believed to have been killed is Ferhat Cherkit, who was shot dead on June 1994. Others killed or threatened include women and children, such as the wife and two children of a retired *gendarme* who were knifed to death on 16 June 1994.

Thousands of others have been killed but it is unclear who killed them: sometimes armed Islamist groups wear security force uniforms and security forces often are dressed in plainclothes.

"All this adds up to a terrifying atmosphere of confusion and insecurity among the Algerian people," Amnesty International said. "Both the state and these armed groups must stop the killings to free the Algerian people from the reign of arbitrary terror."

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