

EXTERNAL

AI Index: ASA 11/15/95

16 November 1995

Further information on EXTRA 110/95 (ASA 11/13/95, 22 September 1995) - Fear for safety and new concern: Deliberate and arbitrary killings

AFGHANISTAN Civilians in Kabul

There is growing concern for the safety of the civilian population of Kabul after a renewed bombardment of the city in recent days. According to reports, between 11 and 13 November 1995 at least 57 unarmed civilians were killed and over 150 injured when rockets and artillery barrages fired from Taleban positions south of Kabul pounded the civilian areas of the city.

On 11 November, 36 civilians were killed when over 170 rockets as well as shells hit civilians areas. A salvo crashed into Foruzga Market forcing the shoppers and traders to run for cover. Rockets struck the Taimani district where many people from other parts of Kabul have settled. Other residential areas hit by artillery and rocket attacks were the Bagh Bala district in the northwest of Kabul and Wazir Akbar Khan where much of the city's small foreign community live. A rocket came through a window of the only working private film studio in Kabul while the crew was filming a scene. Nine people in the studio died on the spot, including director Hamyoon Sadozai, one of Afghanistan's best-known film makers. The only survivor was reportedly thrown out of a window by the force of the blast without serious injuries. Among the victims was an 11-year-old girl who had come to watch her father, a famous actor, on the set.

This is the first time in several months that Kabul civilians have become the targets of rocket attacks and shelling aimed at residential areas in the city - changing the pattern of attacks in recent weeks in which only military targets were hit. On 20 September 1995, the Taleban had issued a five-day ultimatum to attack Kabul if the forces of President Rabbani did not surrender. Following Amnesty International's Urgent Action of 22 September, and appeals from other international organizations, the Taleban withdrew their threat to bombard the city.

Amnesty International is not in a position to confirm that the Taleban were responsible for this latest bombardment, but the reports that the barrages have come from the Taleban-controlled positions appear to be credible. According to Amnesty International's information, the victims of these latest attacks have been almost exclusively civilians. Hospital sources in Kabul have described the killings as the most serious and the bloodiest events since fighting started again around the city in mid-October 1995.

Amnesty International is once again urging the Taleban, and all other warring factions, to abide by the principles of international humanitarian law and refrain from deliberate or indiscriminate attacks against the civilian population of Kabul.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

To Taleban:

- expressing deep concern at the apparent targeting of civilian areas of Kabul by rocket and artillery attacks;
- appealing to the Taleban leaders to ensure that their armed forces refrain from deliberate or indiscriminate attacks, which include shelling, on civilians;

To Taleban and to Afghanistan diplomatic missions:

- urging the leaders of the warring factions (the Taleban and Afghanistan government forces) to respect the principles of humanitarian law that are designed to ensure the protection of civilians and non-combatants in situations of armed conflict.

APPEALS TO:

1. Moulavi Abdul Rahman Zaheb
Office of the Taleban
Darul-Uloom Zia-ul Madares
Jamrood Road
Board
Peshawar
Pakistan

Telegrams: Darul-Uloom Zia-ul Madares, Jamrood Road, Peshawar, Pakistan

Salutation: Dear Moulavi

2. Afghanistan diplomatic mission in your country to be forwarded to government authorities in Afghanistan.

Sections are requested to send copies of this UA to their home governments. Please request them to use their influence with countries which have links with Afghanistan, including Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, to ensure the safety of the civilian population in Kabul.

For security reasons, please give your section's address for responses (not your home address).

COPIES TO:

Pakistan's diplomatic mission in your country requesting them to forward that to the Taleban leaders in Pakistan.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 December 1995.