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**TO: PRESS OFFICERS**

**FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS**

**DATE: 25 July 1991**

**WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 27/91**

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Peru, Ethiopia, Morocco, El Salvador, Honduras and Kuwait and an internal item for response on Iraq.

**1a) NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL**

**Mauritania - 21 August (revised date)**

**AFR 38/07/91**

A targeted news release to accompany a list of more than 300 names of people we know or suspect to have been extrajudicially executed. This follows from a targeted press release in April highlighting the same issue, but this time provides information about some 300 victims.

**Mexico - 18 September**

**Mexico - Torture with Impunity AMR 41/04/91**

News release and possible questions and answers sheet on a report on torture in Mexico. The main point in the report is that anyone who is arrested in Mexico is at risk of torture and that the government has done little to bring police or others to justice. The report contains good comments from bar associations and other organizations about the level of torture in the country and strong examples of torture. The news release will contain the most recent example possible.

**Sri Lanka - 11 September**

A targeted release on a range of human rights violations in north-eastern Sri Lanka, the first document focusing specifically on this region of the country. A draft report was presented to the government on the recent research mission to the country and additional information gathered during that trip will be added. The report deals with abuses by the Tamil Tigers in greater detail than any previous report on the country.

The timing of the release ties in with a visit by a UN working group to the country in early October, which we hope will investigate some of the issues raised in the report.

**ICM - 29 August to 7 September**

**Information will be provided shortly about the media strategy for the ICM.**

**Staff changes at the IS Press Office**

**Starting next week until the beginning of September Anita Tiessen will be on holidays and Susanne Erdl, press officer from the FRG section, will be acting press officer. Please contact Susanne (413-5729) about any general press office questions, particularly relating to upcoming news releases and breaking news. Other inquiries should be directed to:**

**Paula Seager (413-5810) - audio visual, tv interviews, tv task force**

**Elizabeth Fidderman (413-5566) - updating of press officer manual**

**Anna Stuttard (413-5562) - weekly update**

2. AMR 46/WU 03/91 EXTERNAL  
25 July 1991

**PERU: TOP LEVEL AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION OUTLINES CONCERNS**

A four-member Amnesty International delegation, including the Secretary General and a Spanish army colonel, visited Peru from 30 June to 8 July. The delegation outlined to the year-old government the organization's concerns, stressing the existence of a continuing and unabated pattern of gross human rights violations -- including thousands of "disappearances", torture and extrajudicial executions -- as well as threats and attacks against independent and official human rights defenders.

AI pressed for the speedy and effective implementation of recommendations to help reverse the high level of "disappearances" in the zones declared under a state of emergency and administered by the military. These included: registers of arrests to be introduced in all military bases; detainees to be released in the presence of a representative from the Public Ministry or Judge; the Public Ministry to be strengthened with increased resources; and the International Committee of the Red Cross to be granted access to detainees in the hands of the military in the emergency zones.

Meetings were held with President Alberto Fujimori, Prime Minister Carlos Torres y Torres Lara, and with representatives from the Ministries of Defence, Justice and the Interior. The delegation also held talks with the Armed Forces Joint Command and the Director General of the Peruvian National Police. In a meeting with representatives of the Public Ministry, the Attorney General announced that in the ten-year period up to the end of 1990, 5,024 "disappearances" had been registered, of which 1,011 had been clarified.

The authorities reaffirmed their policy of fully respecting human rights and assured the delegation that all alleged human rights violations would be investigated. However, AI has continued to receive information on cases of grave human rights violations reportedly perpetrated by the security forces in the emergency zones.

**3. MDE 14/WU 05/91 INTERNAL (FOR RESPONSE)  
25 July 1991**

**IRAQ: AMNESTY ANNOUNCED FOR ALL POLITICAL PRISONERS**

The Iraqi government reportedly announced on 28 July two amnesties -- one for all political prisoners and army deserters excluding officers and the other for political dissidents who fled abroad.

We have received some reports that scores of prisoners have been released, including some prisoners whose cases AI has raised with the authorities for several years. Those releases cannot be confirmed at this time.

We will be monitoring the announced amnesties and will provide further information on any releases that can be confirmed.

4. AFR 25/WU 03/91 EXTERNAL  
25 July 1991

**ETHIOPIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VISIT, 21 TO 28 JULY 1991**

Two Amnesty International representatives, Martin Hill and Johannes van der Klauwe, are visiting Ethiopia from 21 to 28 July 1991. The two, who are both staff members of Amnesty International's International Secretariat, are visiting Addis Ababa to make further inquiries about the extensive human rights violations committed by the former government headed by Mengistu Haile-Mariam\* and to collect information about developments in the human rights situation since the former government was overthrown on 28 May 1991.

From 1974 until 1991 Amnesty International representatives were unable to visit Ethiopia to examine the human rights situation or discuss human rights concerns with the authorities. The organization welcomes being able to visit Ethiopia now and hopes its representatives will also be able to visit Eritrea in the near future.

\* For further details, see "ETHIOPIA: END OF AN ERA OF BRUTAL REPRESSION - A NEW CHANCE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS", AI Index: AFR 25/05/91, 31 May 1991.

5. MDE 29/WU 05/91 EXTERNAL

25 July 1991

**INTERNAL:** The following item is external and can be used immediately but if used before 7 August 1991, you must delete the second paragraph, reading: "In a letter to mark the 18th anniversary of their removal ... moved to recognised places of detention." This paragraph is embargoed until 7 August because the letter to King Hassan II will not be sent until then.

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**MOROCCO: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES KING TO RELEASE DETAINED MILITARY MEN**

Amnesty International today called on the Moroccan Government to release over 20 members of the armed services detained up to 17 years after their sentences expired.

In a letter sent on the eighteenth anniversary of their removal into incommunicado detention Amnesty International urged Morocco's head of state King Hassan II to release immediately all those whose sentences have expired. Those whose sentences have not expired should be given prompt access to their families, lawyers and medical practitioners of their choice and moved to recognised places of detention.

On 7 August 1973, 61 Moroccan military men, sentenced to between three years' and life imprisonment for alleged involvement in coups d'état against King Hassan II, were taken away from Kenitra Central Prison to an unknown destination. Eighteen years later at least 29 are reported to have died in the remote fort of Tazmamert in the Atlas Mountains where they have been held in life-threatening conditions.

For years the families of the detained men did not even know where they were. Today the picture is clear - and appalling. Letters smuggled out, undoubtedly at great risk, show that the detainees - some of whom were sentenced to only three years' imprisonment - are being allowed to die a slow and painful death. Held in separate cells with little ventilation and light and poor and inadequate food, nearly half are believed already to have died from illnesses almost certainly brought on by the harsh conditions of detention.

"The treatment of Tazmamert prisoners has left an ugly stain on Morocco's human rights record," Amnesty International said. "For years it was one of the 'unmentionables', never raised openly within Morocco."

Until now, families of those detained kept silent, afraid for themselves and their relatives. However, as the death toll grows, families have begun to testify openly. Moroccan human rights groups and other organizations and newspapers within Morocco have had the courage to print their appeals and raise the question openly.

A recently received anonymous letter, which appears to have been written in 1989 by a former prison guard at Tazmamert, describes two passages, one containing 29 cells, some empty;

**"Open the first cell; it's empty except for a stretcher to carry the dead and a big electric torch. The second cell is empty too. Open the third and your blood freezes at the sight of the human corpse lying on a cement shelf: a skeleton with a long thick beard hanging down over his chest, long dirty hair like primitive stone age man; long nails looking like serpent's claws; a strong smell makes you want to vomit, the stench of human waste mixed with the smell of sweat, fear and death. An attempt to call shows that the wretch is still alive, but in agony."**

**One prisoner reportedly committed suicide in 1990. Mimoun Fagouri, a sergeant, had been due for release in 1975 and is reported to have said before his death to those in neighbouring cells: "I am weary. The only way out of Tazmamert is by death."**

**Some of those still alive in Tazmamert are said to have lost their minds; some are believed to be close to death. Amnesty International fears that, unless immediate action is taken, those now alive will soon be dead.**

**In November 1990 the United Nations Human Rights Committee took the rare step of not completing consideration of Morocco's report on its implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. In asking the Moroccan government to return, they made a specific request for further information about Tazmamert and other secret detention centres. At the resumed meeting on 11 July 1991, the delegates of the Moroccan government refused to be present if television cameras were allowed to film in the room. Further consideration of the report was then postponed until October 1991.**

**Amnesty International has welcomed the Moroccan government's release in February 1991 of eight members of the family of General Mohamed Oufkir, who "disappeared" for 15 years from 1972 to 1987 and then were detained incommunicado for four more years. Though concerned that other Saharans and Moroccans remain "disappeared", the organization has also welcomed the release in June 1991 of over 250 people of Western Saharan origin detained incommunicado for up to 15 years in secret detention centres. It now calls on the Moroccan government to take immediate action in relation to the prisoners at Tazmamert.**

6. AMR 29/WU 02/91 EXTERNAL  
25 July 1991

**EI SALVADOR: AI EXPRESSES CONCERN ABOUT EXTRADITION OF CÉSAR JOYA MARTÍNEZ**

On 11 July 1991, Amnesty International wrote to the US government expressing its concern about the case of César Joya Martínez, who, according to Amnesty International's information, deserted from the army in El Salvador. He claimed asylum in the USA but now faces possible extradition to El Salvador -- an extradition AI opposes on the grounds that he risks being subjected to extrajudicial execution or torture.

César Joya Martínez apparently deserted from the Section 2 Intelligence Unit of the First Infantry Brigade and fled to the USA in July 1989. In testimonies given to human rights organizations and to members of a US Congressional Committee since leaving El Salvador, he said he had participated in his official capacity as a member of military intelligence in the extrajudicial execution of eight suspected government opponents, and has made allegations of the involvement of Salvadorian armed forces in the operation of "death squads."

In 1990 the Salvadorian government formally requested his extradition on charges of murder relating to killings which César Joya Martínez claims were carried out under orders as part of his "death squad" activities.

AI stated in its letter to the US government that the charges against César Joya Martínez, and his allegations of the involvement of the Salvadorian military in "death squads", warranted investigation but said that it opposed his forcible return to El Salvador because as a matter of policy AI opposes anyone being returned to a country where they risk being imprisoned as prisoners of conscience or being subjected to torture, "disappearance" or execution. According to international standards, an investigation into his reported involvement in torture and extrajudicial executions could be held in any country, regardless of where the acts were committed.

AI's letter to US Secretary of State James Baker sought assurances that, should an extradition order be issued and the case come before the State Department, the Secretary of State would take all possible steps to prevent the forcible return of César Joya to El Salvador.



7. AMR 37/WU 02/91 EXTERNAL  
25 July 1991

**HONDURAS: AI URGES PRESIDENT TO ENSURE POLICE AND MILITARY NOT GIVEN BLANKET IMMUNITY**

Amnesty International is urging the president of Honduras to uphold the spirit of his recent statement that anyone who violates constitutional safeguards must be punished -- by ensuring that police and military personnel responsible for past human rights violations are not given blanket immunity from prosecution, particularly before the full truth has been made known.

Amnesty International's appeal follows the passing of a sweeping amnesty decree by the Legislative Chamber on 10 July which, if approved by the President Rafael Callejas, could block investigations into killings, "disappearances" and torture committed by government agents in the past.

The amnesty decree, passed by the Legislative Chamber on 10 July, stated that it was to contribute to "a climate of harmony and peaceful coexistence" among the different sectors of Honduran society. Amnesty International noted that political prisoners, and peasants imprisoned in connection with land conflicts would also benefit, but said that parts of the decree contravened internationally agreed principles for bringing to justice those responsible for human rights violations and the right of victims or their relatives to compensation.

The organization said it knew of no specific case where members of the military or police had been convicted for gross human rights violations and there was little evidence to suggest that such abuses have been fully and impartially investigated.

"By formally establishing blanket immunity from prosecution for military and police personnel involved in past human rights abuses, the amnesty decree as it stands would only strengthen the pattern of impunity already existing in Honduras and could encourage further human rights violations," said Amnesty International.

8. MDE 18/WU 05/91  
25 July 1991

**INTERNAL: Sections are asked not to issue this information as a statement or news release, but it may be sent out on request.**

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## **KUWAIT: UPDATE ON AI'S CONCERNS IN POST-OCCUPATION KUWAIT**

### **Arbitrary Arrests and Torture**

Amnesty International remains concerned about the fate of hundreds of Iraqis, Palestinians, Bidun (stateless Arabs) and others who have been arbitrarily arrested by Kuwaiti forces since Iraqi forces withdrew from the country and Martial Law was imposed on 26 February (it was subsequently lifted on 26 June). Many of those arrested have been routinely subjected to torture and other forms of cruel or inhuman treatment. (See Amnesty International News Release, Kuwait: Amnesty International Calls on Emir to Intervene Over Continuing Torture and Killings, AI Index: MDE 17/03/91).

AI has continued to receive reports of arbitrary arrests as recently as late June, despite a demand by the Crown Prince of Kuwait, Shaikh Sa'ad al-Abdallah al-Sabah, on 26 May, for a halt to the "abductions and torture" of non-Kuwaitis. (See Amnesty International News Release, Kuwait: Amnesty International Calls for Halt to Unfair Trials, AI Index: MDE 17/05/91).

### **"Disappearances"**

Amnesty International has received the names of scores of people from various Arab nationalities including Iraqis, Palestinians and Jordanians, who "disappeared" in custody following their arrest in Kuwait between late February and late June. Most have been arrested by Kuwait's security forces and army personnel, while a few others are thought to have been seized by members of the so-called "resistance". Relatives of these "disappeared" have reportedly not been informed of their whereabouts or the reasons for their arrest, despite repeated attempts to make such inquiries with the local authorities. Amnesty International fears that many of them may have been arrested for allegedly "collaborating" with the Iraqi occupation forces and are being held in secret or incommunicado detention where they could be subjected to torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment during interrogation.

### **Expulsions**

Amnesty International learned that an agreement had been reached between the Kuwaiti government and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) at the end of June, to allow officials of the ICRC to interview people in private before they are expelled to Iraq, in order to find out whether they consent to being sent there; if such people indicate a fear of returning to Iraq, the Kuwaiti authorities are reportedly now not expelling them. However, it is not clear whether this applies only to people who are to be expelled to Iraq, or also to those who are to be expelled to other countries where they may be at risk of serious human rights violations. Nor has AI been able to establish for certain what happens to people who, having expressed a fear of returning to Iraq, are reportedly allowed to remain in Kuwait. It is AI's understanding that such people remain in detention, but it does not know what (if any) provision is made to enable them to apply for asylum, or to make arrangements to go to another country. If it is indeed the case that they must remain in detention if they are unwilling to go to Iraq, AI would be concerned that this threat of continued detention may coerce some people to return to Iraq who may not otherwise wish to go, and who might after their return be at risk of severe human rights violations.

AI remains concerned at reports received in June that Kuwaiti authorities have summarily expelled Iraqis, Palestinians, Biduns and others from Kuwait, particularly to Iraq, where they could risk becoming victims of further human rights abuses. Between 9 and 11 June an estimated 180 people were reportedly expelled to Iraq, and up to 600 people, including women and children, were being held in the al-Shuwaikh district of Kuwait, pending expulsion. Some of these people had reportedly expressed a fear of being sent back to Iraq where

they believed they would face imprisonment, torture or execution. AI was concerned to note that individuals had been expelled without being informed of their rights to legal representation or to seek asylum, and that the ICRC had not been given advance notice of the expulsions nor given the opportunity to interview such people beforehand. International law prohibits states from sending people to any country where they would be at risk of serious human rights violations.

On 21 June, AI called on the Emir of Kuwait, Shaikh Jaber al-Ahmad al-Sabah, to take urgent steps to ensure that no person is expelled to Iraq or any other country where they would be at risk of imprisonment as a prisoner of conscience, torture, "disappearance" or execution. AI called for a fair and impartial procedure to identify those who may be at such risk and urged that this procedure be followed in every case where it is proposed to expel a person from Kuwait. To date, no substantive response has been received from the Kuwaiti government in this regard. However, on 30 May, AI did receive a response from Kuwait's Permanent Representative to the UN in New York regarding an individual deportation case AI raised with the government on 22 May. The response stated that the "Kuwaiti authorities are committed to due process of law and justice to all individuals".

#### **Martial Law Court Trials/Death Penalty**

Details of the commutation of death sentences and the lifting of Martial Law Regulations were provided in an Urgent Action appeal issued by AI on 28 June 1991 (see AI Index: MDE 17/07/91). Recent information received by AI indicates that the trials may resume in September.