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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 32/93

Contained in this weekly update is an external items on Morocco and an internal item on War Crimes.

NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Chad - 21 April

Please Note

The document to go with this campaign has been sent out to sections dated February. Please inform your section campaign coordinators and anyone else who may receive it that it is EMBARGOED FOR 21 APRIL.

Chad Campaign, document, news release, Q&A and ENR. The news release has been sent to you, the Q&A will hopefully be sent this week or early next.

Bangladesh - 28 April

Document on serious human rights violations in Bangladesh, accompanied by an embargoed weekly update item.

Tadzhikistan - 5 May

Publication and news release on killings in the context of civil war - with striking similarities to Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Indigenous People - 12 May

(New Information)

News release planned to accompany Focus article on Human rights violations against indigenous people worldwide. Indigenous people will be one of the main themes of our work on the World Conference.

Guatemala - 19 May

(New information)

A document or publication with a news release on a full range of recent human rights violations (in the past year or so) in Guatemala.

Egypt - 26 May

(New information)

A document or publication and news release on all our concerns in Egypt. These include very high numbers of prisoners and torture.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Morocco - 14 April

Document and weekly update item - the IS will be sending this only to selected media (largely Arabic speaking). The weekly update item is included in this issue.

China - 16 April

Document and embargoed weekly update item on torture, timed to coincide with China reporting to the UN Committee Against Torture (CAT). China is scheduled to appear on 23 April - media are entitled to attend and we will be encouraging contacts to do so.

War Crimes tribunals, Former Yugoslavia - 19 April

See internal item in this issue for details of change of plans re war crimes tribunal external document, media action and weekly update.

Brazil - 7 May

Document on prison massacre, including new forensic information. Weekly update item to go with it. Sections are also being asked to carry out campaign work in connection with this document.

Unconfirmed news initiatives

News releases or embargoed weekly update items are being considered on the following subjects:

Malawi (May)

World Conference (early June)

Nagorno-Karabakh (to go with possible action, May)

Aceh, Indonesia (14 July)

Section Initiatives**French Section - European Press Officers' Meeting**

The second European Press Officers' meeting will take place in Paris this year. The date of this meeting is now fixed for 15 and 16 May as the majority of you asked for. It will be focused on two themes: Audiovisual work (production and TV experiences) and how to improve it; and the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

European World Conference Press Briefing in June

The British Section Press Office has been talking to the EC project office and the Francophone Belgium Press Officer about holding a European press briefing in Brussels for MEPs and for journalists who will be covering the World Conference. The date will probably be Tuesday, June 8th in the morning. The aim will be to look at the EC's role as a whole in terms of its internal shortcomings (Asylum issues, etc), external policies - aid/development, etc, and also to look at Europe's role within the UN.

Although the idea has been suggested by the British Section, it is hoped that all European Section Press Officers will be interested in being involved. For further information please contact either Daphne Davies, in the British Section Press Office or Johannes in the EC project office.

2. MDE 29/WU 02/93 EXTERNAL
6 February 2015

MOROCCO: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON GOVERNMENT TO HALT SYSTEM OF "DISAPPEARANCES" ONCE AND FOR ALL

Testimonies of those who "disappeared" in Morocco for up to 18 years reveal a system of secret detention centres in Morocco where detainees have been held incommunicado without charge or trial, often in appalling, life-threatening conditions.

Those taken to the secret centres are told: "Your names aren't on any lists. You're here to bow your backs". Many die in secret detention; often they are buried in the prison yard. Those released are told to say nothing to expose the government's policy "or you'll disappear again". In 1991, after a worldwide campaign, Morocco released nearly 300 "disappeared".

In a report made public today, Amnesty International appeals to the Moroccan government to release the rest of the "disappeared" and to end the system of "disappearances" once and for all.

Most of the "disappeared" are Sahrawis from Western Sahara, arrested after Morocco took possession of the territory in 1975. In 1991, nearly 300 who had been held in secret centres in Laayoune and Qal'at M'Gouna, the latter a favourite tourist destination, were released. But hundreds more are believed to be held in secret centres in Rabat, in prisons in the remote Atlas mountains or in buildings whose exteriors reveal nothing of their true nature in towns on favourite tourist routes. Several centres in the beautiful valley of the Dades are named.

Over 100 Moroccans are also known to have "disappeared" after being detained and over 30 of these remain unaccounted for. They include opposition trade unionists arrested in the 1960s and 1970s and members of the armed forces implicated in attempted coups. Former guards of the "disappeared" who helped to smuggle out letters also "disappeared" themselves.

Nearly half of Amnesty International's report is given over to testimonies of those who have "disappeared" and later been released. Mohamed Nadrani, an artist held for nine years in secret, who only spoke of his experiences after he escaped from Morocco in 1991, tells how he kept his sanity during 18 months' solitary confinement by painting on the cement of his cell with ink made from coffee and mud. "But I'd have one eye on the drawing and another on the door as this was forbidden, so sometimes I'd have to rub out everything very quickly otherwise they'd beat me".

A Sahrawi, Kenti Sidi Balla, who "disappeared" from 1987 until 1991 and was held for two years with 14 other Sahrawis in a secret building in Skoura, says: "They used to beat us without any reason and anyone going to the toilet would be beaten by four or five guards on the way there and on the way back".

"We were undernourished, badly treated; terrible chronic diseases appeared", says Brahim Ballagh, a Sahrawi held at Qal'at M'Gouna. "Many of our friends died and we later heard that they were buried in a common grave".

One detainee, Moulay el-Hassan el-Laili, washed the bodies of those who died at Agdz and Qal'at M'Gouna. He died one day after he was released, on

22 June 1991 but before dying, he recited both the names of the dead and the dates of their death. An appendix to the report lists 48 "disappeared" Sahrawis said to have died in the secret centres of Agdz, Qal'at M'Gouna and Laayoune.

The report welcomes the releases of former "disappeared" but says that those released remain restricted in their movements and those still in Morocco have never been allowed to talk about their experiences openly. They have never been compensated for the years of anguish they have suffered, they receive little or no medical care for the physical and mental after-effects of their suffering, and no inquiry has ever been held into how they came to be detained without charge or trial, often in appalling conditions, for so long. No investigation has been made into the deaths in secret detention.

Furthermore, Amnesty International is gravely concerned about the fate of hundreds of former "disappeared" who still remain unaccounted for, and that no steps appear to have been made to release them. They include Soukeina Jnebilila, a Sahrawi woman with two

children who "disappeared" in Tantan in December 1975 and has never been heard of since; Colonel Mohamed Alouch, who was called to army headquarters three days after an attempted coup against Morocco's King Hassan II in 1971, and never returned; and Belgacem Ouezzane, a member of the auxiliary forces, who never came out of prison after he was acquitted of sheltering leftist opponents of the government on 30 August 1973.

Amnesty International calls on the Moroccan government to set up an independent and impartial commission of inquiry to visit all alleged places of secret detention and release all those illegally detained. The commission should account for all those who have "disappeared" after arrest over the last 35 years and, for those who have died, investigate and clarify the circumstances and causes of their deaths and bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations. Amnesty International calls on the Moroccan government to end the practice of "disappearances" and to close this chapter in Morocco's history once and for all.

3. EUR 48/WU 03/93 INTERNAL
7 April 1993

DATES FOR EXTERNAL DOCUMENT & WEEKLY UPDATE ON WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL - FOLLOW UP TO EUR 48/WU 02/93.

This is a follow-up to the internal item AI Index: EUR 48/WU 02/92 in Weekly Update NWS 11/24/93. Sections will not receive the external document on the war crimes tribunal until Monday, 19 April. However, to allow sections time to generate a debate in the media in the days leading up to the expected release on 22 April of UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's report to the Security Council on how to set up the war crimes tribunal, sections will receive an external weekly update by Thursday 15 April.

Because the external document will not now be released until a few days before Boutros-Ghali's report, LIGOO is also preparing a more technical version of the external document, in the form of a Memorandum, which the IS will submit directly to Boutros-Ghali in the next week (LIGOO outposts will copy it to key government missions in New York and Geneva) with the aim of influencing his report.