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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 45/91

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Peru, Viet Nam, the United Kingdom and Ethiopia and Eritrea.

In a Weekly Update item last week we said the freed Moroccan prisoner of conscience Abraham Serfaty had been one of AI's 30th anniversary appeal campaign cases. As some of you quite rightly pointed out, he was not. Apologies for that, and thanks to those of you who let us know.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

Uganda - 4 December (New information)
Uganda - The National Resistance Army and human rights violations
AFR 59/20/91

You have been sent the news release, although you may not yet have received the document, which has been held up.

Myanmar - 10 December (New information)

You have now been sent the news release on abuses in Myanmar, timed to coincide with both Human Rights Day and Aung San Suu Kyi receiving the Nobel Peace Prize. A short biography of Aung San Suu Kyi will also be sent to you later this week.

Guinea - 12 December (New information)

A news release targeted only for Africa specialists.

Ghana - 18 December
Ghana - Political imprisonment and the death penalty

Targeted news release for African media to go with our first major report on Ghana in recent times.

2. AMR 45/WU 04/91 EXTERNAL
28 November 1991

INTERNAL

This Weekly Update item accompanies a short document Some recent cases of human rights violations (AI Index AMR 46/79/91).

EXTERNAL

PERU: FURTHER INFORMATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS

On 21 November 1991 Amnesty International published an advertisement in three Peruvian national daily newspapers calling on the government's security forces and the armed opposition groups Sendero Luminoso (Shining Path) and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement to respect human rights.

In the advertisement, the organization said that thousands of people have been summarily killed and "disappeared" in Peru since 1980 and that a sense of impunity pervades the armed forces. The organization also unequivocally opposed and condemned deliberate and arbitrary killings by Sendero Luminoso and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement.

Information about such atrocities has continued to reach Amnesty International. The organization is concerned about a series of ten "disappearances" and one extrajudicial execution in the Alto Huallaga area between 8 August 1991 and 19 November 1991, all of them reportedly perpetrated by the army. The organization has appealed to the authorities to investigate urgently the "disappearances" and the killing.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the killing of 12 men, three women and one nine-year-old child on 3 November 1991. Circumstances suggest they may have been extrajudicially executed by the security forces or by so-called paramilitary death-squads acting with their acquiescence. The killing took place during a social gathering in the interior yard of a building in the Barrios Altos district of Lima.

According to witnesses, about 10 assailants entered the yard, shouting and ordering everybody to lie on the floor, before they shot them using firearms fixed with silencers.

Neighbours reported that the assailants arrived in two vehicles, one of which reportedly belonged to the Minister of the Interior and the other to the office of the Presidency. After the incident, the authorities said the vehicles had been stolen some time ago. The killings took place near installations used by the police and the army.

According to official documents made available by a Peruvian senator, the building had been watched since 1989 by a police intelligence group which believed the building was frequented by Sendero Luminoso sympathizers.

Amnesty International has urgently appealed to the authorities for a thorough and impartial investigation immediately into the killings, and for the safety of all witnesses to be guaranteed.

Amnesty International is further concerned about the continued deliberate killing by Sendero Luminoso of people taking no active part in the hostilities.

For example, in August 1991 members of Sendero Luminoso killed three Catholic priests in the province of Santa, Ancash department. On 10 August 1991 two Polish Franciscans, Fr Zbigniew Strzalowski and Fr Michal Tomaszek, were reportedly killed by members of Sendero Luminoso while speaking with a group of young Peruvians. On 25 August 1991 an Italian priest, Alessandro Dordi Negrone, was reportedly shot in the face three times by members of Sendero Luminoso. He died instantly.

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3. AMR 41/WU 01/91 EXTERNAL
28 November 1991

SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF VIET NAM: NGUYEN CHI THIEN AND THREE OTHER POCS FREED

Four well-known prisoners of conscience have reportedly been freed in the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

According to information received by Amnesty International, Nguyen Chi Thien, a long-term prisoner of conscience and one of AI's 30th anniversary campaign appeal cases, was released on 22 October 1991 from a "re-education camp" after serving more than 12 years without charge or trial.

AI has also received information that Father Joseph Le Thanh Que, a Jesuit priest held since 12 December 1980, Doan Quoc Sy, a well-known writer held since 2 May 1984, and Duong Thu Huong, a prominent woman writer and dramatist detained since 13 April 1991, have also been released.

Nguyen Chi Thien was first arrested in 1958 and sentenced to two years' hard labour in a "re-education camp" for his part in the publication of a literary magazine during the time of the "Hundred Flowers" campaign, a period of relative free expression in North Viet Nam. He was released in 1961, but returned to a "re-education camp" the same year and declared an "underdeveloped citizen". After his release in September 1964 he remained free until October 1965 when he was sent again to a "re-education camp" where he was detained for almost 13 years.

On his release in 1978 he returned to his home town of Hai Phong where he continued to write poetry and teach English and French to private students. He was arrested again in April 1979 for giving a manuscript of his poems to a foreign diplomat in Ha Noi. His detention was not acknowledged by the Vietnamese authorities until May 1988 when it was announced that he was awaiting trial.

Nguyen Chi Thien has spent more than half his life in prison for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

Father Le Thanh Que was released on 1 September 1991. A Roman Catholic priest, he was arrested on 12 December 1980, accused of being "counter-revolutionary", and sentenced in June 1983 to 15 years' imprisonment. He has reportedly been suffering from psychological disorders.

Doan Quoc Sy, a writer, was arrested in 1984 accused of "propaganda against socialism". After a trial in 1988 he was sentenced to nine years' imprisonment, later apparently reduced to eight years, and was released on 4 November 1991.

Duong Thu Huong was released on 20 November 1991. A prominent writer and dramatist, she was arrested on 13 April 1991 and held without charge or

trial reportedly for trying to send sensitive documents out of the country.

Amnesty International welcomes their releases from imprisonment, but notes that they were all imprisoned for exercising their fundamental human rights. Amnesty International is currently seeking to ascertain what conditions, if any, have been attached to their releases.

Several dozen other political prisoners, many of them long-term prisoners of conscience, continue to be held in Vietnamese prisons or under house arrest. They include writers, members of religious groups, professionals and people associated with the former government of the Republic of Viet Nam (South Viet Nam). Amnesty International continues to call upon the Vietnamese authorities to release immediately and unconditionally all prisoners of conscience, and to ensure that trials of political prisoners meet international standards of fair trial.

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4. EUR 45/WU 05/91 EXTERNAL
28 November 1991

UNITED KINGDOM: BROADWATER FARM CONVICTION QUASHED AFTER EVIDENCE DEEMED QUESTIONABLE

Amnesty International welcomed the appeal court's decision on 25 November that quashed Winston Silcott's 30-year sentence for murder, riot and affray after hearing that the chief investigating officer had altered key police notes that led to the conviction.

The court reserved judgment on the convictions of Engin Raghıp and Mark Braithwaite, the two other co-defendants charged with the same offences. Judgment may be delivered within the next few weeks.

The human rights organization also called for an immediate review of other convictions based solely on confessions that took place in the aftermath of riots at the Broadwater Farm housing estate in London in November 1985.

Winston Silcott, Engin Raghıp and Mark Braithwaite were convicted on the basis of uncorroborated confession evidence in March 1987 of the murder of police officer Keith Blakelock and of riot and affray and sentenced to life imprisonment. They were arrested along with approximately 360 others.

In February 1989 AI questioned the fairness of trials that followed the riot. Suspects, including juveniles, were held in incommunicado detention. They were denied legal access and were interrogated in the absence of lawyers. They were denied access to family members. Some were allegedly tricked by the police into signing documents waiving their rights.

AI was concerned by claims that people had been forced or threatened into making confessions. Many detainees claimed they had admitted to lesser charges under threat of murder charges, or other threats.

AI stated that doubt existed about the safety of the convictions based on contested statements made in the absence of a lawyer. AI requested that the government review the cases of all those convicted solely on the basis of confessions. As far as the organization is aware, 19 people were convicted of serious offences on the basis of their confessions.

Furthermore AI urged the government to carry out a wide-ranging inquiry into the overall pattern of police behaviour during the police investigation of the Broadwater Farm riot. From the many allegations made by detainees, AI was concerned about a pattern of police behaviour which put at risk the fairness of trial proceedings.

The Prosecution stated at the Court of Appeal hearing on 27 November that if the apparent dishonesty of the senior officer in charge of the murder investigation had been known in 1987, then prosecutions would not have been brought. The prosecutor said: "We say unequivocally we would not have gone on against Raghıp and Braithwaite or any of the other defendants

having learned of the apparent dishonesty of the officer in charge of the case." The prosecution acknowledged that Detective Superintendent Melvin was responsible for Engin Raghip and Mark Braithwaite being denied access to a lawyer.

5. AFR 25/WU 05/91 EXTERNAL
28 November 1991

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL DELEGATION TO VISIT ETHIOPIA AND ERITREA

Amnesty International representatives are due to visit Ethiopia and Eritrea between 2 and 14 December 1991 for meetings with the governments in Addis Ababa and Asmara about human rights.

The delegation will be led by Maître Bacre Waly Ndiaye, a lawyer from Senegal, who until recently was Vice-Chairperson of Amnesty International's International Executive Committee. In both Ethiopia and Eritrea the delegates plan to meet members of the government. They will also meet other relevant officials and people concerned about human rights issues which fall within Amnesty International's mandate.

These will be the organization's first talks with the Transitional Government of Ethiopia and the Provisional Government of Eritrea, following the overthrow six months ago of President Mengistu Haile-Mariam's government, which had been responsible for gross human rights violations over a long period. An earlier informal visit to Addis Ababa was made in July 1991 by Amnesty International representatives who met newly released political prisoners and other people.