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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 123/94

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PLEASE NOTE: Enclosed is the final and approved text of the Annual Report news release EMBARGOED FOR 0600 hrs GMT 7 JULY 1994.

## NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

### INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

USA - 14 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 114/94

Turkey - 22 June - SEE NEWS SERVICES 118/94 AND 104/94

Pakistan - 27 July - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

### TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

\*\*Denmark - 21 June\*\* - PLEASE NOTE ANOTHER CHANGE OF EMBARGO DATE. Apologies for the numerous changes to the embargo date. This is the final date. SEE NEWS SERVICES 118/94 AND 105/94

Mozambique - 23 June - SEE ENCLOSED ITEM, SEE NEWS SERVICE 115/94

Myanmar - 20 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

### FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 7 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

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10 JUNE 1994

**INDIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS ABDUCTION OF TWO TOURISTS IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR**

Amnesty International is calling on the allegedly pro-Pakistan armed group, Harkatul Ansur, to release two British tourists they abducted in Jammu and Kashmir this week and have been holding as hostages.

The group apparently abducted David Mackie and Kim Housego, 16, to pressurize the Indian Government to release other members of their group currently held in custody by the Indian authorities, or to focus attention on Jammu and Kashmir's human rights record.

This is the latest in a series of abductions by armed Kashmiri secessionists or pro-Pakistan groups in Jammu and Kashmir. Most of the victims have been Indian nationals, abducted and held hostage or in some cases killed.

Amnesty International opposes hostage-taking by both armed political opposition groups and governments and is appealing to those responsible for holding the two men and any other hostages in Jammu and Kashmir to release them immediately.

"Abductions and hostage-taking do not further the protection of human rights in Jammu and Kashmir and we condemn such practices unequivocally", the human rights organization said.

For years, Amnesty International has been greatly concerned by human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir -- both grave violations by Indian Government forces during counter-insurgency operations and human rights abuses, such as hostage-taking and deliberate and arbitrary killings, by armed political opposition groups.

In December 1993, Amnesty International published a report, *An Unnatural Fate: 'Disappearance' and Impunity in the Indian States of Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab*, detailing some of its recent concerns. The organization continues to seek the agreement of the Indian Government for Amnesty International to carry out human rights investigations in the region but such direct access has not been granted so far.

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AI INDEX: ASA 19/WU 02/94  
EMBARGOED FOR 14 JUNE 1994

**AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT NOT TO SACRIFICE PRINCIPLE TO POLITICAL EXPEDIENCY IN HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY**

The Hong Kong and British Governments seem set to avoid taking key steps to improve human rights safeguards in Hong Kong. Amnesty International said as it called on them to act now to provide Hong Kong with an exemplary system of human rights safeguards.

"A principled stand on human rights should not be sacrificed to political expediency", the human rights organization said.

Two months ago, Amnesty International released a 45-page report analyzing shortcomings in Hong Kong's implementation of international human rights instruments in force in the territory and called on the government to take six major steps, including establishing an independent human rights commission.

Recent Hong Kong press reports and other sources suggest that the measures currently considered fall far short of those the organization had called for. For their part, Chinese officials, while avoiding direct reference to Amnesty International's report, have suggested that a human rights commission could be disbanded by China after 1997.

While some sectors of the Hong Kong establishment are reported to oppose further human rights safeguards, many in the community, including grassroots organizations, law groups and elected officials, have advocated institutional reform to protect human rights.

Hong Kong and British officials at the highest level have often professed their commitment to enhance human rights protection in Hong Kong. The China government, which will recover sovereignty over Hong Kong in 1997, has also supported various United Nations resolutions calling on all countries to develop safeguards for human rights.

All governments have a duty to apply to their own jurisdiction the recommendations they endorse internationally. One of the recommendations endorsed by almost all governments at the UN World Conference on Human Rights, held in 1993 in Vienna, was in favour of the establishment of independent government bodies such as human rights commissions.

This should be done now. The Hong Kong and British Government are due to respond shortly to a report by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British parliament, calling among other things for an independent human rights commission to be set up in Hong Kong. In several meetings with government officials in Hong Kong and London in April and May, Amnesty International received indications that its proposals and those of the Foreign Affairs Committee were being studied with a view to producing a package of measures to reinforce human rights safeguards in Hong Kong.

"The political context in Hong Kong is difficult," said Amnesty International, "but this should not stand in the way of full commitment for human rights protection".

The Hong Kong Government is not fulfilling all of its current commitments under international human rights treaties in force in Hong Kong and the organization believes that the six measures it recommended in its April report are needed now. They are:

◆ **Establish an independent human rights commission with a mandate to develop an effective human rights complaints system; to prevent violations whenever possible and to develop human rights awareness programs;**

◆ **Make the Legal Aid Department independent;**

◆ **Review any further measures needed to guarantee the future independence of the judiciary;**

◆ **Ensure that those who bring a Bill of Rights court case against the government should not have to pay the government's cost if they lose (except if the court deems the case to be abusive or frivolous);**

◆ **The United Kingdom should extend to Hong Kong all relevant international human rights conventions;**

◆ **The UK Government should take the lead in seeking agreement with the Governments of Hong Kong and China, and with relevant UN committees, on the method of reporting to those committees after 1997 about the implementations of UN human rights covenants which currently apply to Hong Kong but not to China.**

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**For further information, please contact Pierre Robert at Amnesty International's International Secretariat.**

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**AI INDEX: AMR 51/WU 09/94**

**EMBARGOED FOR 0001 hrs GMT 14 JUNE 1994**

**SHOCKING CONDITIONS IN US PRISON CRITICISED**

**For 23 or 24 hours a day more than 350 inmates in a US prison are kept underground in concrete, window-less cells allowing virtually no natural light or fresh air.**

**Prisoners are allowed to exercise only on week days, five at a time, for just one hour in a bare, enclosed, concrete yard that gives no view of the outside.**

**These were just some of the shocking conditions witnessed when an Amnesty International investigation team visited Oklahoma State Penitentiary's H-unit in March this year -- conditions that the organization says amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment.**

**"Prisoners are confined to a concrete world in which they never see a blade of grass, earth, trees or any part of the natural world", Amnesty International said in a report released today.**

**"These conditions in fact seem to be worse in many ways than in Oklahoma's former death row," Amnesty International said. "No prisoner should be confined long-term under these conditions".**

**Since the Oklahoma unit opened in November 1991 Amnesty International has received repeated complaints about its conditions, which the human rights organization consider to be in breach of both US and international standards and should be urgently reviewed. Some prisoners have developed severe depression since being in the unit, which was designed by a committee of prison staff.**

**Amnesty International's report focuses mainly on death row prisoners -- about 118 at the time of the organization's visit. Unlike other inmates, their classification is not reviewed and they may therefore be confined to H-Unit indefinitely without regard to their individual behaviour.**

**The cells have no alarm bells and prisoners' talk with guards mainly through an intercom system controlled by the prison staff. When this is switched off it is extremely difficult for inmates to attract attention.**

**Amnesty International believes that this remoteness between prisoners and prison staff can breed a sense of indifference to inmates' legitimate needs. Some prisoners have complained that guards on the unit have ignored their requests for medical or other attention, and although some prisoners are reported to be seriously mentally ill they receive little or no psychiatric care.**

**The human rights organization was also gravely concerned by the stress and danger caused by the prolonged confinement of two prisoners together in such enclosed cells. The isolation and lack of out-of-cell activities or any opportunity for work, education or recreation programs can have a detrimental effect on the physical and mental health of prisoners, according to Amnesty International.**

**The report compares H-Unit to death rows in some other US states where conditions have improved in recent years through litigation. Although death row prisoners throughout the USA are generally more closely confined than other inmates and few have access to work, rehabilitation or other programs, few states now appear to impose the same degree of restriction as in H-Unit.**

**The report contains a number of recommendations to the prison authorities for the improvement of the unit, including the provision of more out-of-cell time; better exercise facilities and access to fresh air; the opportunity for death row prisoners to have their custody status reviewed; and a review of the medical and psychiatric services provided to prisoners in H-Unit.**

**ENDS\**

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10 JUNE 1994**

**RWANDA: KILLINGS OF RELIGIOUS FIGURES AN OUTRAGE**

Recent killings of 13 Catholic priests by rebel Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF) soldiers supposedly guarding their safety has today prompted Amnesty International to call on all political leaders in Rwanda's conflict to guarantee that prisoners and injured or helpless people will not be slaughtered.

"It's horrendous news that the RPF has allowed defenceless prisoners to be killed", Amnesty International's Secretary General Pierre Sané said.

"In the aftermath of these latest outrages, it is vital for the RPF as well as all other political leaders in Rwanda to give guarantees, immediately and publicly, of the physical safety of all prisoners, as well as all those under their control, injured or receiving medical treatment", Sané said.

Amnesty International condemned the killing of the country's sole Catholic Archbishop and 12 other priests by RPF soldiers in the past few days at Kabgayi, a centre for the Catholic church in southern Rwanda.

Before the RPF's arrival in Kabgayi, several thousand people had sought refuge at the town's religious centre to avoid being killed by government soldiers and militia. Many of those seeking sanctuary were picked out by government forces or handed over to them without hindrance, then taken away to be executed.

Archbishop Vincent Nsengiyumva, a former central committee member of the political party that has helped organize the mass killings over the last two months, was killed shortly after RPF forces took over control of the town from government troops. Those responsible for the murders were reportedly new recruits who apparently saw their families massacred in a local church.

At the scene of the killing of the 13 priests in Kabgayi, the RPF executed one of the four assailants at once and the other three escaped. Amnesty International is calling on the RPF to bring those responsible to justice and assure them a fair trial, rather than subject them to summary execution.

At the same time, UN sources in Kigali confirmed that government soldiers have executed nine other priests, along with 63 other people, in a church in Kigali's Nyamirambo district. The victims had apparently called without success on the UN mission in Rwanda to come to their assistance.

"During the mass killings in Rwanda, no respect has been shown for churches or religious figures even though most Rwandese are members of Christian churches and the majority of them are Catholic," Sané said.

Churchmen appear to be targeted for killing in the Rwandese conflict, often for their attempts to protect civilians from harm. More than 60 priests and nuns have been among those executed by government soldiers and government-sponsored militia, and thousands of people massacred have been killed inside churches or parish compounds after seeking sanctuary there. At least one bishop in a government-held area is known to have been threatened with death after trying to prevent killings by soldiers or militia.

**At the same time, other religious leaders have systematically refused to condemn the mass killings, appearing to condone them. On 11 April 1994, Rwandese Catholic bishops meeting at the Vatican pledged their support in a press statement to the interim government of Rwanda.**

**ENDS/**



0600 hrs gmt 7 July 1994

**HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS**  
**UNDER FIRE**

Amnesty International's Annual Report  
details violations in 151 countries

Human rights activists increasingly came under fire from their governments last year, even as human rights featured on the international agenda more prominently than ever before, Amnesty International said as it released its 1994 annual report.

"In a world of rapid political change, human rights groups have sprung up in dozens of countries where they could not have operated freely before", Amnesty International said. "But the new freedoms, and those that defend them, are in danger in countries teetering on crisis and violence."

Human rights defenders -- lawyers, journalists, trade unionists, peasant leaders and many others -- can play a key role in countries going through major transitions and reforms, helping to establish legal and constitutional safeguards for human rights and creating a safe space for peaceful dissent, Amnesty International said.

"Human rights defenders often became the first victims of governments trying to build a good human rights image abroad and fearful of the damage human rights activists can do to that image", Amnesty International said.

In its global survey covering 151 countries, the organization records that last year prisoners of conscience were held in 63 countries; more than 100,000 political prisoners were locked up in detention without charge or trial in 53 countries; more than 112 governments tortured prisoners; and political killings by the state took place in 61 countries. The death penalty was carried out on approximately 2,000 people in 33 countries.

The report calls for the United Nations to finish, after almost nine years, the process drawing up a declaration to protect human rights defenders.

**EUROPE** -- In Bosnia-Herzegovina, hundreds of deliberate and arbitrary killings by all sides were reported. At least 15,000 people, many prisoners of conscience, were held in detention camps during the conflict. Armed political groups also committed human rights abuses, such as in the United Kingdom, where Republican and Loyalist groups killed 73 civilians.

In 26 other countries in Europe, there were reports of torture or ill-treatment in prisons, police stations or other detention centres, including in France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Turkey and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. At least 24 people in Turkey died in custody apparently as a result of torture, a practice reportedly widespread among Turkish police or gendarmes. Many victims were human rights defenders.

In some countries that emerged from the break-up of the former Soviet Union, authorities promised new rights that their security forces then suppressed. In Tadjikistan, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" continued, killing scores of people targeted for their political activity or regional origin. In Turkmenistan, authorities jailed opponents to prevent meetings with foreign dignitaries.

**MIDDLE EAST** -- In the Middle East, human rights activists faced intimidation and abuses in countries where the authorities did not tolerate criticism. For example, Mansur Kikhiya, a prominent opponent of Libya's government and a founding member of the Arab Organization for Human Rights, "disappeared" in Egypt following his reported abduction by Libyan government agents. He remains missing to this date.

There were widespread arbitrary arrests of thousands suspected of opposing the government or sympathizing with Islamist groups in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq and Tunisia. Prisoners of conscience were held in 11 countries, including Morocco, Syria and Tunisia. Detainees were tortured in 15 countries, including Egypt, Iran and Israel and the Occupied Territories.

The region saw a dramatic increase in use of the death penalty in Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In Kuwait and Algeria, executions were carried out for the first time since 1989.

**AMERICAS** -- In 1993, Amnesty International launched an international campaign against political killings and "disappearances", violations that claimed more than a thousand lives across some 15 countries in the Americas including Brazil, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti and Peru. In

Colombia, for example, the armed forces and their paramilitary agents extrajudicially executed hundreds of people. Hundreds of prisoners of conscience were held in several countries, including Peru and Cuba. In Brazil, hundreds of street children, adolescents and adults were killed or "disappeared".

Torture and ill-treatment by police was widely reported in many countries including Haiti, Venezuela, Mexico, Peru and Colombia. Although the death penalty was abolished in most of the region, 38 people were executed, including four juveniles, in the United States of America.

**AFRICA** -- In Africa, political killings were the predominant human rights violation, though political arrests and torture continued in 1993. Foreshadowing recent violence in Rwanda in 1994, tens of thousands of people died in Burundi as local Hutu government officials and supporters killed Tutsi civilians, while Tutsi groups and security forces also killed thousands of unarmed Hutu civilians. Hundreds of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" were also reported in 20 countries, including Angola, Chad, Liberia, Rwanda, Senegal, Togo and Zaire.

Elsewhere in the region, the governments of Cameroon, Nigeria and Sudan held prisoners of conscience and thousands of political detainees were held in Ethiopia. The police and army tortured detainees in South Africa and more than 4,300 people died in political violence there.

**ASIA** -- In Asia, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" continued to be widespread across the region. Hundreds of extrajudicial executions were reported in Cambodia as well as in Afghanistan, where deliberate and indiscriminate bombings of homes, hospitals and mosques also left hundreds dead and thousands injured. In India, hundreds of political activists were extrajudicially executed and scores more were "disappeared" by security forces in the states of Jammu and Kashmir, and Punjab. In Pakistan, hundreds of people were reportedly tortured in police or military custody, in some cases resulting in death.

Torture and ill-treatment of political detainees, peaceful protestors and criminal suspects was common in 19 Asian countries, including China and Indonesia and East Timor, where hundreds of suspected government opponents were prisoners of conscience or possible prisoners of conscience. In Myanmar as well, hundreds of government opponents remained imprisoned, including dozens of prisoners of conscience. The death penalty was imposed in at least 10 countries. In China alone, more than 1,400 people were executed and more than 2,500 remained sentenced to death in that country.