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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 140/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - NIGERIA, BANGLADESH

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

United Kingdom - 14 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

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

Myanmar - 20 July - PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASE SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

India - 16 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

Kosovo - 20 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Algeria - first week of October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

France - second week of October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

## TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Lusophone Summit - 27 June - PLEASE NOTE - This summit has been postponed. Hold on to the news service item, we will let you know when the summit is rescheduled. SEE NEWS SERVICE 124/94 for item

Equatorial Guinea - 30 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 135.

North and South Korea - 21 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 135

Brazil - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

## FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 0600 hrs GMT 7 July 1994 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

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**AI INDEX: AFR 44/ WU 02/94  
29 JUNE 1994**

**NIGERIA: SECURITY FORCES ATTACK OGONI VILLAGES**

During the last 40 days government forces have reportedly killed more than 50 members of Nigeria's Ogoni ethnic group and wounded more than 180 others in attacks in Rivers State in southeast Nigeria.

These latest killings have occurred since the deployment of security forces in Ogoniland was increased following the murder on 21 May 1994 of four leading members of the Ogoni community by a group of youths at a meeting in Giokoo.

Ostensibly searching for those responsible for the murders, security forces are reported to have attacked some 30 villages, firing at random, destroying and looting property and setting fire to homes.

The attacks are believed to be continuing and there are fears that many more members of the Ogoni community may be killed.

"These attacks appear to be part of the continuing attempts by the Nigerian authorities to suppress the Ogoni people's campaign against the oil companies which they claim are devastating their land", Amnesty International said today.

The human rights organization is calling for urgent measures to halt the killings and to protect all members of the Ogoni community. The organization is also calling for a thorough and impartial investigation into these recent killings and all other reports of extrajudicial executions in Rivers State in 1993 and 1994, for its findings to be made public and for those found responsible to be brought to justice in accordance with international standards.

According to reports, the village of Uegwere Bo-ue was attacked twice within four days. On 4 June, four people were shot, two of whom died. During a second attack on 8 June, seven people were killed, including a 10-year-old boy. Some of the victims are reported to have died after their homes were set ablaze by soldiers.

In the village of Buan, a pregnant woman, Leyira Piri, is said to have been shot dead; six others were critically wounded. Other villages attacked are reported to include Yeghe where two people were shot dead on 1 June and Okwali where five people killed on 12 June and several others critically wounded.

In their "search" for those directly responsible for the murders on 21 May, the security forces have also indiscriminately arrested members of the Ogoni community. Reports suggest that several hundred are being held either at Bori Military Camp in Port Harcourt or at Kpor in Ogoniland. Some are reported to have been released after the extortion of large amounts of money by soldiers.

The President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), Ken Saro-Wiwa, was arrested on 22 May and accused of inciting youths to murder the four Ogoni leaders on 21 May. It is not clear whether he has been formally charged.

Amnesty International believes that the accusations against him are unfounded, that he has neither used nor advocated violence and that his most recent detention, as on several occasions in the past, is solely because of his campaign on behalf of the Ogoni people.

The Ogoni community has been campaigning against environmental damage and inadequate compensation for destruction of land and crops by oil companies operating in Ogoniland. In April 1993 security forces were reported to have opened fire on peaceful demonstrators in Biara; 11 people were injured. Shortly afterwards, further shootings at Nonwa resulted in one death.

**Since 1993, the security forces are alleged to have been responsible for a number of extrajudicial executions after being brought into Ogoniland to maintain order during intercommunal fighting. Hundreds of Ogoni were reportedly killed in the fighting, and there was evidence implicating the security forces in the killings. An official inquiry into some of these killings has not made its findings public.**

**ENDS\**

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**AI INDEX: ASA 13/WU 03/94  
29 JUNE 1994**

**BANGLADESH: CALL TO THE GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE EQUAL PROTECTION TO ALL SIDES DURING GENERAL STRIKE ON 30 JUNE**

Tomorrow's nationwide strike and demonstrations called by opposing political and religious groups in Bangladesh could be the scene for a savage and bloody showdown according to police sources.

A newly formed Islamist alliance backed by the Jamaat-e-Islami, Bangladesh's fourth largest political party, has called for a nation-wide strike against all "anti-Islamic forces" on 30 June. Student groups in opposition to the Islamists, and with the support of the main opposition party, have announced a counter demonstration for the same day.

"We're afraid violent clashes are likely to take place", Amnesty International said, "when there have been clashes in the past policing is said to have been one-sided which is why we're calling on the Government of Bangladesh to make sure that police officers and the security forces give equal protection to everybody".

The call for the strike is the latest in a series of increasingly menacing statements by Islamist groups in Bangladesh. They have already given the government an ultimatum to punish "infidels" and "anti-Muslim elements", to adopt a stronger anti-blasphemy law and to ban newspapers reporting in what it considers an "un-Islamic manner".

Several groups have threatened to take the law into their own hands if the government fails to try and sentence feminist writer Taslima Nasrin to death. She has been in hiding since charges of blasphemy were brought against her on 4 June. Two cash rewards have been offered by different Islamist groups for her death and demonstrators have repeatedly marched through Dhaka chanting "Hang her, hang her".

Demonstrations against newspapers and journalists responsible for articles criticizing Islamists have been reported from all over Bangladesh during the last few weeks; newspapers have been burned and newspaper offices and journalists have been attacked.

"To our knowledge, the Government of Bangladesh has not publicly condemned the incitement to religiously motivated violence nor taken any steps to bring those issuing death threats to justice", Amnesty International said today.

The human rights organization is reiterating its call to the Government of Bangladesh to take all possible measures to ensure the personal safety of those charged with blasphemy.