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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 153/94

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 15 JULY 1994

AI INDEX: NWS 11/153/94  
DISTR: SC/PO

NO OF WORDS: 837

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - COLOMBIA

**PLEASE NOTE:** This is to confirm that AI Netherlands will be holding a European Press Officers meeting on 27 and 28 October in Amsterdam. The issues to be covered are: Agreements made in Paris last May; AV work; Sudan Campaign; and Womens Conference in Beijing. Please contact Maud Bredero, Press Officer at AI Netherlands, to let her know if you will be attending and if you would like further info.

We will be sending out a note in the near future proposing an IS-hosted international press officers meeting early next year, so keep a look out for that if you are not in a European Section.

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Pakistan - 27 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

Myanmar - 20 July - 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

**\*\*North and South Korea - CANCELLED\*\***

Sri Lanka - 15 July - SEE NS 146/94

Brazil - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

**AI INDEX: AMR 23/WU 08/94  
EMBARGOED FOR 19 JULY 1994**

**COLOMBIA: INTERNATIONAL SHOW OF SOLIDARITY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS**

**In a show of international solidarity for human rights activists in Colombia, delegates from Amnesty International's International Secretariat are today in Bogotá to present a petition signed by more than 15,000 people in three European countries to Colombian human rights organizations.**

**The petition, signed by politicians, lawyers and other prominent figures in Switzerland, Germany and Austria, is calling on the Colombian Government to ensure the safety of human rights activists and to publicly endorse their work.**

**"Human rights activists are one of the main targets for political killings, "disappearances" and other serious human rights violations at the hands of the security forces in Colombia," Amnesty International said.**

**"The Colombian Government has persistently failed to protect them or publicly show recognition for the important work they do."**

**In May Colombian non-governmental organizations and senior government officials held a meeting at which the Minister of Defence, Rafael Pardo, promised to issue a public statement recognizing the legitimacy of the work of Colombian human rights organizations.**

**"Such a move should urgently be made as it would help counter the constant accusations of subversion directed at human rights workers by members of the security forces," Amnesty International said. "Accusations which are often followed by death threats and human rights violations."**

**Amnesty International's delegation in Bogotá will also present copies of letters written by politicians and other public figures from around the world expressing concern about the human rights situation in Colombia.**

**In Switzerland members of the government of the Geneva Canton have adopted a resolution calling for the respect of human rights in Colombia and urging the Swiss Government to take appropriate action and expressing their commitment to take up the issue within the Swiss Government.**

**As copies of the petition are being handed over in Bogotá, the petition will also be handed over to the Colombian Embassies in Germany, Switzerland and Austria as well as to European Union officials.**

**Amnesty International will also present a letter to the President Elect of Colombia, Ernesto Samper Pizano, who is visiting London this week. It welcomes positive comments he has made about tackling human rights in Colombia and urges him to take immediate action, on assuming office, to improve the human rights situation.**

**"Our action today comes at a time when the Colombian executive has once again shown its lack of political will to act to prevent human rights violations," Amnesty International said.**

**On 7 July 1994 President Gaviria failed to promulgate a law which would have criminalized forced "disappearances" although the draft law had been approved by Congress.**

**This followed close on the heels of the recent adoption of the Inter-American Convention on the Forced Disappearance of Persons by the Organization of American States (OAS) in June 1994 in Belém, Brazil. Colombia voted in favour of the convention which expressly rules out "due obedience" as a basis for the defence of members of the security forces implicated in "disappearances".**

**It also rules out the handling of such cases by military jurisdiction, the very grounds on which President Gaviria objected to the draft law.**

**"The shock is all the greater since President Gaviria is due to become General Secretary of the OAS in August 1994 once the presidency is handed over to President Elect," Amnesty International said.**

**"Our action today is intended to show the Colombian Government the level of international concern about human rights in Colombia," Amnesty International said.**

**The Colombian Government has organized a conference to discuss human rights issues on 21-22 July as part of a peace agreement with a guerrilla organization that has laid down arms. Amnesty International will attend the meeting as observers.**

**"This is an opportunity for the government to show whether or not it is willing to change its policy and really address the human rights problem in Colombia," Amnesty International said. ENDS/**