
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 200/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - RWANDA/BURUNDI (This item is not being sent to international media by the IS press office), BRAZIL (see news schedule below. I will let you know the exact time of the embargo on 14 September as soon as the time of the press conference launch has been decided).

EDAI PLEASE NOTE: Please would you send me the text of the Spanish translation of the Brazil news release as soon as it is done. Thanks - Dina

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Brazil - 14 September - PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN INTERNATIONAL RELEASE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Kosovo - 19 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Indonesia - 28 September - LAUNCH OF CAMPAIGN

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

France - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Yemen - 1 September - See news service 194/94

Thailand - 6 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 184/94

Togo - 15 September - See news service 168/94

Turkey - 14 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

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AI INDEX: AFR 47/WU 14/94

EMBARGOED FOR 0800 hrs GMT 1 SEPTEMBER 1994

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATORS IN RWANDA AND BURUNDI ARE BROUGHT TO JUSTICE

Amnesty International is today renewing its call for all governments to make a public commitment to ensure that people responsible for grave violations of fundamental human rights in Rwanda and Burundi are brought to justice.

None of the members of the United Nations have so far, to Amnesty International's knowledge, publicly declared that they will bring to justice those responsible for human rights violations in Rwanda and Burundi or transfer them to jurisdictions which will do so.

Amnesty International's urgent call comes in the wake of the Swiss Government's reported expulsion to Zaire, on 18 August, of a person suspected of war crimes and crimes against humanity in Rwanda.

The Swiss authorities are reported to have gone ahead with the expulsion without investigating the case and before seeking any assurances from the Government of Zaire that it would conduct such an investigation and – if there was sufficient evidence to prosecute – bring the person to justice in a fair trial.

Amnesty International has written to the Swiss authorities expressing its concern that the expulsion took place under the reported circumstances. The organization is interested to know what steps were taken by the Swiss authorities to investigate the reports of the person's responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Amnesty International has also requested information concerning the steps taken by the Swiss Government to fulfil its responsibility, under basic principles of international law applicable to all states, to bring to justice those responsible for such crimes or to transfer them to a jurisdiction which will do so in accordance with international fair trial standards.

These principles should apply wherever such people happen to be, wherever the crime was committed, whatever the nationality of the perpetrators or victims and no matter how much time has elapsed since the commission of the crime. The perpetrators of grave human rights violations should not be allowed to benefit from any legal measures exempting them from criminal prosecution or conviction.

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AI INDEX: AMR 19/WU 04/94

EMBARGOED FOR 14 SEPTEMBER 1994

BRAZIL: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CHALLENGES PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES TO STAND UP FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International is challenging the presidential candidates in Brazil's forthcoming elections to publicly commit themselves to a human rights agenda and to spell out how they would end Brazil's appalling human rights record.

"With national elections scheduled to begin in October, Brazil is at a turning point in the struggle for human rights," Amnesty International said. "These elections offer the opportunity for vigorous new initiatives to hold the security forces and the Brazilian authorities to account and end Brazil's cycle of violence."

Ten years after the country returned to civilian rule, human rights violations continue at an alarming rate. These include the extrajudicial execution of street children and adults by the police and "death squads", lynchings, and the torture and ill-treatment of prisoners and others in police custody.

Reliable figures for such violations are difficult to obtain. However, in 1991 alone, the Sao Paulo police killed 1,140 civilians -- a quarter of all violent deaths in that year suggesting a systematic use of excessive lethal force by police. In Rio de Janeiro, 1,200 people were reported to have been killed by "death squads" between September 1993 and June 1994. The most recent national figures from the Federal Attorney General's Office show that police recorded 5,644 violent deaths of children between 1988 and 1991. Many of these killings were carried out by the police or by "death squads" operating with police complicity.

Over the last few years, the scale of human rights violations has increased, marked by larger and larger massacres, often of the most vulnerable members of society. At the same time, few of those responsible have been brought to justice as the pattern of impunity for human rights crimes has continued.

The participation of police agents in "death squad" killings and the blatant practice of extrajudicial executions by police in uniform are now publicly acknowledged by Brazilian authorities and society alike. Amnesty International believes the continued condition of virtual impunity enjoyed by the police is the main cause of the recurring violations.

Even in cases where witnesses have come forward and some attempt at prosecution has been made, the end result has often been the re-instatement of those accused into active duty in police forces, and the murder of witnesses.

"The killings and torture can only be stopped if the people elected to government give a high enough priority to actively promoting and protecting human rights," Amnesty International said.

In a report released today which documents just some of the many cases of human rights violations received by Amnesty International, the organization puts forward a proposed agenda for human rights in Brazil, including a series of concrete recommendations for the state and federal authorities that take office in 1995.

These include major institutional reforms of Brazil's police and judiciary, and specific measures for the effective protection of the victims of human rights violations.

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