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**TO: PRESS OFFICERS**

**FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS**

**DATE: 6 JANUARY 1993**

**WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 01/93**

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Guatemala.

**\*Weekly Update\***

**(New Information)**

Please note that the Weekly Update will now be indexed differently, with a new number each time it is produced; ie. additions to the weekly update will also each have a new index number. We now produce so many additions each week that it has not been clear to sections how many to expect, with the risk some might go missing. We are discussing a new format and name for the Weekly Update (as it is now almost daily!) and will keep you posted of developments. Any input on how you wish to see the weekly update develop would be welcome.

**NEWS INITIATIVES**

**\*Bosnia-Herzegovina - 21 January\***

**(New Information)**

A 10-page document on rape in Bosnia will be embargoed for 0900 hrs gmt, Thursday 21 January 1993 and will be released at a press briefing in Geneva (details follow). The IS Press Office will send the document to all section Press Officers as soon as possible.

\*There have been section requests for a conference telephone call on the issue of rape. We will organise this as soon as possible. Please let Paula know if you would like to join in (Tel: +71 413 5562/e-mail:pseager).

The Swiss Section, in connection with the IS, is organizing a media event and press briefing at the UN Palais des Nations in Geneva - as a conclusion to the letter-writing campaign for human rights in the Former Yugoslavia. We already have over 250,000 letters from around the world, which will be used for a visual photo opportunity - which should attract TV. The IS will be inviting the international media, including agencies, radio and television - you are encouraged to invite any of your media who may be interested in attending.

We will be sending you more details as they are finalized - in the meantime, please contact Daniel Bolomey at the Swiss Section if you have any queries.

**INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES**

**Australia - EMBARGO DELAYED**

**(New Information)**

Please note that the document on Aboriginal deaths and ill-treatment in custody has been held up in approvals and will not meet the embargo date originally set. We will keep you posted of developments and the new date.

**Japan - 10 March**

A document and news release on refugee issues in Japan. We anticipate a high level of media interest in this news release.

**TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES**

**Chad - 29 January**

An open letter is being planned to coincide with the National Conference in Chad. The IS will be sending it to specialist media, embargoed for 29 January.

**Sri Lanka - EMBARGO DELAYED**

(New Information)

Please note that the document about the Sri Lankan government's implementation of AI's recommendations has been delayed. There will be a weekly update to accompany it when it is ready. We will keep you posted of further developments. The IS Press Office plans to send it to selected media.

**\*Brazil - 1600 hrs gmt 15 January 1993\***

Please note the human rights concert which was planned for 17 January has unfortunately been cancelled. The report will still be launched in Brazil as planned (details follow), but the text of the weekly update item index: AMR 19/WU 02/92, sent in Weekly Update NWS 11/51/92, needs to be changed:

Remove the last sentence on page 2 of the text (referring to the concert), so that the item ends: "curb human rights violations in the region."

Please note that the embargo has been confirmed for 1600 hrs gmt, 15 January 1993. The above-mentioned weekly update item is to accompany a document about human rights violations against indigenous peoples in Brazil, which will be sent to you in the first weekly mailing of 1993. A spokesperson from the IS is in Brazil to deal with media there, and the IS will be sending the weekly update item to international media.

**Racism and ill-treatment in Europe - 3 February**

News release to go with Focus and campaign action on racist ill-treatment in Europe. The embargo has been confirmed for 3 February 1993. The IS Press Office will send the Focus article to section Press Officers next week as the February Newsletter has been delayed because of IS staff shortages.

**SECTION INITIATIVES**

**Equatorial Guinea - 14 January**

The Spanish Section has written a news release to accompany a document on Equatorial Guinea, which will be embargoed for 14 January. The document has been sent out to you in the weekly mailing. Please contact Cesar Diaz at the Spanish section for more information about the news release.

**2. AMR 34/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL  
5 January 1993**

**GUATEMALA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNED FOR SAFETY OF THOUSANDS OF RETURNING REFUGEES**

**Amnesty International is concerned for the security of over 5,000 refugees who are scheduled to return to Guatemala from Mexico on 13 January 1993, in what will be the first phase in the negotiated return of over 40,000 refugees.**

**Since 1989, refugees living in Mexico, who fled the Guatemalan army's counter-insurgency campaigns of the early 1980s, have been seeking a negotiated return to Guatemala. On 8 October 1992, the Guatemalan government and the refugees in Mexico signed an Accord in Guatemala City, which sets out the conditions for the return of the refugees and states that the return will be voluntary. It recognizes the rights of free association, organization and movement of returnees and in particular, the Accord guarantees a return in conditions of security and dignity, and the right to life and personal and community integrity of the returnees.**

**Amnesty International is concerned, however, that recent military operations in Guatemala may put some of the returning refugees in danger. The first 5,000 refugees are due to return to areas of the departments of El Quiché and Huehuetenango. Amnesty International is particularly concerned for the safety of over 2,700 refugees due to return to the area of Polígono 14, Ixcán, department of El Quiché.**

**On the last days of November and the first of December 1992, army units launched an aerial and land operation in the nearby area of Cuarto Pueblo, Ixcán, during which it was reported that the communities of Cuarto Pueblo and Los Angeles came under serious attack. According to information received by Amnesty International, some 70 families resident in the two communities mentioned fled to Mexican territory as a result of this attack. The area in which the military operation took place is adjacent to the area of Polígono 14, on the other side of the Xalbal River.**

**Amnesty International fears that, because of the proximity of the areas under attack to the area marked for the return of the refugees, these incidents put in grave risk the security of the returning refugees. For this reason, Amnesty International is urging the Guatemalan government to ensure the full respect and continuing protection to the right to life and physical security of all returning refugees, as outlined in the Accord.**