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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 23/93

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

NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Chad - 21 April

Please Note

The document to go with this campaign has been sent out to sections dated February. Please inform your section campaign coordinators and anyone else who may receive it that it is EMBARGOED FOR 21 APRIL.

Chad Campaign, document, news release, Q&A and ENR. The news release should be with you by 2 April, the Q&A shortly afterward.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

US Juvenile Death Penalty - NEXT WEEK

A weekly update item about executions of juveniles scheduled in both Texas and Missouri, will be sent out shortly, and will be embargoed for some time this week. The IS will be sending it to media.

Baltic States Death Penalty Action - 1 April

Weekly update enclosed in WU NWS 11/20/93, embargoed for 1 April to coincide with the action launch. The IS press office is not proactively sending this out to media, though it will be used in response to media enquiries. It is mainly to assist sections who are planning media initiatives to go with the action.

Morocco - 14 April

Document and weekly update item - more info soon.

Brazil - 7 May

Please note new embargo date. Document on prison massacre, including new forensic information. Weekly update item to go with it. Sections are also being asked to carry out campaign work in connection with this document.

Section Initiatives

French Section - European Press Officers' Meeting

The second European Press Officers' meeting will take place in Paris this year. The date of this meeting is now fixed for 15 and 16 May as the majority of you asked for. It will be focused on two themes: Audiovisual work (production and TV experiences) and how to improve it; and the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna.

European World Conference Press Briefing in June

The British Section Press Office has been talking to the EC project office and the Francophone Belgium Press Officer about holding a European press briefing in Brussels for MEPs and for journalists who will be covering the World Conference. The date will probably be Tuesday, June 8th in the morning. The aim will be to look at the EC's role as a whole in terms of its internal shortcomings (Asylum issues, etc), external policies - aid/development, etc, and also to look at Europe's role within the UN.

Although the idea has been suggested by the British Section, it is hoped that all European Section Press Officers will be interested in being involved. For further information please contact either Daphne Davies, in the British Section Press Office or Johannes in the EC project office.

Weekly Update 11/23/93

ASA 16/WU 03/93 EXTERNAL
23 March 1993

INTERNAL

FOLLOW-UP TO NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATES' VISIT TO THAILAND

Please draw this to the attention of Myanmar Coordinators.

This provides additional information and suggestions for campaigning to ASA 16/WU 01/93.

The Nobel Peace Prize Laureates' visit to Thailand, which included Ross Daniels, Chair of the IEC on behalf of AI, received massive Thai and international media attention. In order to sustain the international pressure created by such widespread press exposure, sections are encouraged, if possible, to use this weekly update in publicity activities and campaigning work on AI's concerns in Myanmar. Direct media work would be effective, emphasizing the fact that in spite of recent and widespread international calls for an end to the pattern of gross human rights violations in Myanmar, there has been no improvement in the situation. A Section-Level Action will be issued shortly encouraging follow-up action to lobbying efforts associated with the UNCHR and the Nobel Laureates' mission. Sections may want to bear in mind that 24 April is a significant date for human rights in Myanmar, and plan action around that time. It is the first anniversary of Declaration 11/92, which allowed for the release of political prisoners not deemed a threat to "national security", and initiated the first releases of prisoners in several years. However, in spite of this concession, the ruling military authorities continue to detain hundreds of political prisoners, dozens of them prisoners of conscience.

EXTERNAL

MYANMAR: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL RENEWS APPEAL FOR RELEASE OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE AND OTHER PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Eight Nobel Peace Prize Laureates, including Ross Daniels for Amnesty International, gathered in Thailand last month to call for the release of fellow laureate Aung San Suu Kyi.

Although Myanmar's ruling military authorities, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), denied them access to Myanmar, the laureates' delegation was able to meet both the King of Thailand and Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai. They also visited Burmese refugee camps on the border.

The laureates' appeal for Aung San Suu Kyi's release was rejected by the SLORC, who said in reference to the appeal, "evil external influences are falsely accusing Myanmar of human rights violations...". Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest.

On 10 March, after the report of the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on Myanmar was issued during the 49th session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, a strong resolution was adopted by its members, which expressed regret that the laureates were unable to enter Myanmar to meet Aung San Suu Kyi. The resolution also deplored "the continued seriousness of the situation of human rights in Myanmar" and strongly urged the SLORC "to restore full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms" in Myanmar. It called for the release of Aung San Suu Kyi and for greater cooperation by the SLORC with the Special Rapporteur.

In spite of these developments, dozens of prisoners of conscience remain in detention, and torture and extrajudicial killings are routine. Human rights violations are widespread throughout the country, and a climate of fear prevails in both the towns and in rural ethnic minority areas. Hundreds of civilians have been ill-treated or killed when forced to act as porters or unpaid labour for the military. Political prisoners continue to be tortured in Myanmar's detention centres, and those who have been released are regularly intimidated and threatened by Military Intelligence.

Amnesty International renews its appeals to the SLORC to release Aung San Suu Kyi and all other prisoners of conscience immediately and unconditionally. It further urges the SLORC to put an end to torture and executions, and to take immediate action to halt human rights violations.