

AI Index: NWS 11/54/93
Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 1499

Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street

London WC1X 8DJ

United Kingdom

TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 2 JUNE 1993

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 54/93

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Senegal and Syria and an internal item on War Crimes Tribunal.

NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

UN WORLD CONFERENCE-RELATED NEWS INITIATIVES ONLY THROUGHOUT JUNE

Annual Report - 8 July

Annual Report publication, Worldwide Summary, Regional Summaries, Regional Updates, news release. All these materials, except the news release are almost ready and you will receive them this week.

Indonesia (Aceh) - 28 July

Document and news release to go with action on massive numbers of political killings.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Tunisia - 3 June

The summary of a document - Tunisia: Women victims of harassment, torture and imprisonment, AI Index: MDE 30/02/93 - is being faxed to some selected media on 3 June. The report, which is embargoed for 3 June, was sent out in this week's Weekly Mailing. If you need an earlier copy, please contact Donatella at the IS on +44 71 413 5631.

****Saudi Arabia - 1 July****

A weekly update item is being written to go with the document: Saudi Arabia: An Upsurge in Public Executions, AI Index: MDE 23/04/93. The document and weekly update item will be embargoed for 1 June and will be sent out to selected international media by the IS Press Office. Please note that the document is being sent out in the weekly mailing on 3 June.

Section Initiatives

British Section - Update on European World Conference Press Briefing in June

Please note the time, date and place of this press conference.

The Press Conference will be held on Thursday, June 10th, at 11am at the International Press Centre, Boulevard de

Charlemagne 1, 1040 Bruxelles.

The two speakers are:

Ken Coates - MEP and chairman of the European Parliament Subcommittee on Human rights

Daphne Davies - Amnesty International British Section

We will also be asking someone from a Brussels-based NGO.

A press release will accompany the press conference.

The conference will call on the EC and its member states to adopt a coordinated and focused approach at the World Conference with a view to adapting and improving the UN human rights mechanisms and to promote the proposal to appoint a Special Commissioner on Human rights. In addition the Press Conference will provide journalists with a critique of the EC's own human rights record.

Please will Press Officers in EC Sections contact their media who have contacts in Brussels to let them know about the Press Conference

2. AFR 49/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL
2 JUNE 1993

SENEGAL: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VISITS SENEGAL

Three Amnesty International representatives are scheduled to visit Senegal from 5 to 19 June 1993 to carry out research into reports of human rights violations.

Since a resurgence of violence in the country's southern Casamance region began in September 1992, Amnesty International has been receiving disturbing allegations of killings of prisoners and others by the government's security forces. There are also reports of killings of prisoners carried out by an armed opposition group, the *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de la Casamance* (MFDC), Movement of Casamance's Democratic Forces.

Amnesty International's representatives will be investigating reports that some prisoners held by the security forces have been subjected to torture and that more than 100 such detainees remain held without trial in Dakar prisons after many months of detention, apparently on suspicion of involvement with the separatist cause. Amnesty International's delegates will also be seeking further information about killings by the MFDC, as the organization condemns all deliberate and arbitrary killings.

Amnesty International last visited Dakar in October 1989 for talks with senior government officials about a memorandum which Amnesty International had previously submitted to the government. This was later published in May 1990 as a report, Senegal: Torture - the Casamance case, AI Index: . Amnesty International issued a further report about developments in Casamance in January 1991, entitled: An escalation in human rights violations in Casamance region.

**3. MDE 24/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL
2 June 1993**

SYRIA: SUPREME STATE SECURITY COURT TRIALS: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR THE RELEASE OF PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE AND FAIR HEARINGS FOR OTHERS

Amnesty International has urged the Syrian authorities to release all the prisoners of conscience who are among up to 500 political defendants currently being tried by the Supreme State Security Court (SSSC), and to ensure fair hearings for all the other defendants. The organization's concerns were communicated to the authorities by an Amnesty International delegation which visited Damascus from 8 to 18 May to observe sessions of the trials. A previous fact-finding delegation visited Damascus in December 1992 to collect information about the trials and met ministers, the SSSC judges and prosecutor, defence lawyers and relatives of defendants.

The defendants were arrested at different times between 1980 and 1992, in connection with prohibited political parties, but were not brought to trial until July 1992. They are facing various charges which include membership of associations aiming at changing the economic and social structures of the state or the fundamental fabrics of society by terrorist means; carrying out activities contrary to the socialist system of the state; opposing the objective of unity between Arab countries, or opposing or obstructing any of the objectives of the Ba'ath party revolution by means of participating in or inciting demonstrations or assemblies, or by dissemination of false information in order to weaken the confidence of the masses in the objectives of the revolution. The prescribed punishment for such offences ranges from three years' imprisonment to the death penalty, however, the SSSC prosecutor has assured Amnesty International's delegates that he has not requested the death penalty.

Amnesty International believes that the majority of the defendants have not been involved in any advocacy of or actual violent activities but are detained simply because they are suspected of membership or links with illegal political parties, distribution of leaflets and attending their meetings. Amnesty International's delegates urged that they be released without delay as prisoners of conscience. They include Dr Ayman Daghastani, in detention since September 1987 for having read the Red Flag, the newsletter of the Party for Communist Action.

A small number of the defendants are accused of involvement in violent incidents, but Amnesty International is concerned about irregularities in pre-trial and trial proceedings and has sought assurances that they be given fair hearings. Pre-trial irregularities have included detainees being held in lengthy pre-trial detention, in some cases 13 years, without access to a lawyer and without being formally informed of the charges against them; and defendants being denied the opportunity to be assisted by lawyers during their interrogation by the court's prosecutor.

Concerns about the trial process have included defence lawyers having limited access to their clients' files and, in some cases, being denied the right to meet in private with the defendants and to summon defence witnesses; the failure of the court to investigate torture allegations and order medical examinations; and the lack of the right of appeal in trials before the SSSC, whose decisions are final. Such decisions are subject only to a review by the Minister of the Interior, who may ratify the verdict, order a retrial, or dismiss the case altogether. In Amnesty International's view such a review does not constitute an adequate form of appeal as required by international standards.

4. EUR 48/WU 06/93 INTERNAL
2 June 1993

In addition to Press Officers, please ensure that this item is forwarded to: - Home government lobbyists and IGO coordinators
- EC Contactpersons
- Campaigners

INTERNAL

UN SECURITY COUNCIL MOVES AHEAD TO SET UP WAR CRIMES TRIBUNAL FOR FORMER YUGOSLAVIA

On Tuesday 25 May 1993 the UN Security Council voted to accept all of Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali's recommendations about how to set up the war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia and instructed him to move ahead to create the tribunal.

In the weekly mailing sent out this week sections will receive the third external document on the war crimes tribunal: **Moving forward to set up the war crimes tribunal for the former Yugoslavia**, AI Index: EUR 48/03/93. This document was written before the Security Council vote on Tuesday. It assesses to what extent Boutros-Ghali's draft Statute reflected the 15 guiding principles AI set out in the document **From Nuremberg to the Balkans**. Because the Security Council accepted all the Secretary-General's recommendations and turned his draft Statute into the governing document of the tribunal, the latest AI document is still relevant. This point should be made when you distribute copies of the third external document.

LIGOO does not expect that any further section level action will be needed over the next two to three months. We will now wait to see how Boutros-Ghali goes about setting up the tribunal in practice. If, after a few months, it becomes clear that there are serious shortcomings, or if there is unreasonable delay in setting up the tribunal, we will consider further action such as lobbying UN and governments through AI's New York office and home government approaches by sections. Sections are again asked to report back to Nick Howen in LIGOO on the results of actions taken on the war crimes issue so far.