

AI Index: NWS 11/71/93
Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 2991

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 25 JUNE 1993

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 71/93

Contained in this weekly update is are external items on Jamaica, Norway and two items on Egypt.

PLEASE NOTE:

In the last 12 hours there has been a wave of attacks on political and economic targets across Europe by Kurdish activists from Turkey. This is leading to interest in human rights abuses by both the Turkish government and armed opposition groups in the southeast of Turkey. For the most recent information, please refer to several recent UAs and also to the weekly update item in issue 59 (AI Index: EUR 44/WU 03/93). Sections should also be on their guard as Kurdish groups have in the past targeted Amnesty offices for peaceful demonstrations.

NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

SECRETARY GENERAL PRESS CONFERENCE IN CAIRO, EGYPT

Pierre Sané will be visiting Egypt from 28 June to 4 July and will be giving a press conference on Tuesday 29 June, at 1800 hrs (local time), in Cairo.

Weekly update item 4, enclosed in this document, gives full details of the event and his visit. It will be issued to international and Egyptian media by the IS Press Office on Monday 28 June.

Pierre Sané will be giving a speech, which will also be issued as a press release embargoed for 1800 hrs (Cairo time) on Tuesday 29 June. The IS Press Office will fax this statement to international media as soon as the press conference begins - please note it is embargoed until then and should not be given to media in advance.

Please refer to OAU six-point appeal, AI Index: IOR 63/04/93, which we will fax/e-mail/telex to you as an urgent note to press officers today. This document will also be handed out at the press conference on Tuesday 29 June, and is embargoed until then.

UN WORLD CONFERENCE-RELATED NEWS INITIATIVES ONLY THROUGHOUT JUNE

****WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS****

(New Information)

PLEASE NOTE: We are expecting a paragraph response from the AI Vienna press office as soon as the World Conference ends (the time it will end is not definite yet - although it continued throughout last night). A full evaluation statement of the World Conference will be prepared when the IS staff return to London and may not be issued until 8 July.

PLEASE NOTE: A statement was given to media by Joseph Gitari of AI at an information briefing at the NGO area of the Conference Centre in Vienna at 1600 hrs (local time) yesterday. This has been sent to you as an urgent note to press officers and may be given to journalists.

PLEASE NOTE: An oral statement was delivered to the Plenary Session of the World Conference at 20.30 hrs (Vienna time) 22 June, by Joseph Gitari (IS staff member). The statement, which was sent to you as an urgent note to press officers on 18 June, may now be given to journalists.

Annual Report - 0600 hrs gmt, 8 July

Annual Report Summaries, Regional Updates, ENR and news release have all been sent to you.

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Indonesia (Aceh) - 28 July

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

Tunisia - possibly December 1993

The research team is in the early stages of planning a news release, document and membership action on Tunisia for the end of the year. The document sounds quite exciting - they want to compare the government's many promises on human rights to its actual record, by quoting the government directly. They also want to highlight the government's international image and look at its self-appointed role as human rights leader of North Africa.

They are therefore looking for press cuttings about Tunisia and human rights from the last two years, from as many countries and newspapers as possible. Many sections have cuttings files - it would be a great help to the research team if you could look through your files and fax or post suitable cuttings to them within the next month or two. Hopefully things will be a bit quieter for many of you after the annual report and you might find time to do this. Thanks for your help.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

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 July and will be sent out to selected international media by the IS Press Office. Please note that the document has been sent out in the weekly mailing.

2. AMR 38/WU 03/93 EXTERNAL
25 June 1993

JAMAICA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SENDS OBSERVER TO LONDON HEARING OF JAMAICA DEATH SENTENCE CASES

An Amnesty International delegate is to attend the final appeal hearing in London on 28 and 29 June of the cases of two men sentenced to death in Jamaica.

Sri Lankan lawyer Mr Fritz Kottegoda will attend a hearing at the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council (JCPC), which is the final court of appeal for Jamaica, while the Committee is hearing an appeal from Earl Pratt and Ivan Morgan. They were initially sentenced to death fourteen years ago, having been convicted of murder, and warrants for their execution have been issued on three separate occasions.

Earl Pratt and Ivan Morgan were convicted in 1979 and sentenced to death. Their appeal was dismissed in 1980 but the Court of Appeal took three years and 10 months to put its reasons in writing - a delay which prevented them from lodging an appeal to the JCPC. Although they were later refused leave to appeal the judges said they were "disquieted by the fact that in a case involving a capital sentence there should be such a long delay between the date of hearing an appeal and the date of the reasons".

A warrant was last issued for their execution in March 1991 but they were granted a stay of execution pending a decision on a constitutional motion filed on their behalf. The motion argued that to execute them would be unconstitutional as it would constitute cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, in view of the time they have spent on death row. This appeal was dismissed on 18 June 1992; in July they were granted leave to appeal this decision to the JCPC.

The United Nations Human Rights Committee recommended in 1989 that their sentences should be commuted because of a violation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in their cases.

The decision on this appeal is of crucial importance to many prisoners in Jamaica and other countries in the English speaking Caribbean who have spent long periods under sentence of death. A positive decision would mean that many could have their sentences commuted; a dismissal of the appeal could herald the resumption of hanging in Jamaica, where there has been an unofficial moratorium on executions since February 1988. Unless the prerogative of mercy is exercised in these cases the outcome could be a disastrous development for human rights in the region, Amnesty International said.

3. EUR 36/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL
25 June 1993

Following is a translation of a press statement issued on 9 June by the Norwegian Section.

EXTERNAL

ROUND-TABLE CONFERENCE IN OSLO:

AIMS TO STRENGTHEN EFFORTS AGAINST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN EASTERN EUROPE

"This meeting, where representatives of those in Eastern Europe engaged in war and bloody conflict with each other, are assembled around the same table, shows that it is possible to build bridges and together promote human rights, co-operation and peace even though the picture usually presented to us is that of totally deadlocked conflicts."

So says Secretary General, Jannicke Heyerdahl-Larsen from the Norwegian Section of Amnesty International, approaching the end of the international round table conference "Another Way" in Oslo.

Fourteen human rights activists from areas of conflict in Eastern Europe such as the former Yugoslavia, Armenia, Azerbaydzhan and the Ukraine and top international leaders have this week been gathered at Amnesty's Norwegian section and Institute for Human rights. Their aim was to discuss how local, regional and international efforts for Human Rights could be improved and better co-ordinated.

Ethnic, National and Religious Conflicts

"Amnesty International aims to help local individuals and organizations who all work towards the same humane ideals in the human rights field. The ethnic, national and religious conflicts in Eastern Europe have created new human rights issues and incomprehensible suffering. These new issues mean that Amnesty has to find new ways to work against human rights violations. During this conference we have been able to examine ways of increasing the effectiveness of both local and international human rights work," says Jannicke Heyerdahl-Larsen.

The building of a more systematic method of co-operation across country borders by organizations working within the field was central to a 10-point plan agreed to at the meeting.

Through a register of independent organizations in Eastern Europe that work for human rights and have experience of ethnic conflicts, an international network has to be built up. It is also aimed to develop a system for the protection of local human rights activists with support from the UN and KSSE, as well as methods to enable the organizational network to work at urgent actions.

One very important aim is to counteract "false" information during ethnic and religious conflicts through the provision of information about initiatives by local organizations and peaceful action. Amnesty aims to produce radio programmes in appropriate languages for independent, local broadcasting and international radio stations, as well as to advertise human rights through television and local press. The possibility of establishing regional resource centres to collect and communicate information will also be assessed.

"The plan also aims to monitor savage and hostile speech and information. The hostile use of words is often the beginning of serious conflicts, provoking human rights confrontations and in a lot of cases leading to human rights abuses," says Jannicke Heyerdahl-Larsen. We will also work out a very detailed description of signals which typify the first stages of ethnic and religious conflicts. It will give us a tool to recognize conflicts as they start and therefore offer an early warning. The Institute for Human Rights has been asked to examine the issues of the right to self-determination in international law and the relationship between collective and individual rights.

Headline

Education and the resolution of conflicts are other central points in the plan. Knowledge of human rights in Eastern Europe is still very limited. The production of educational material and the training of professionals in core positions such as the police, lawyers and the army is felt to be missing by human rights activists in Eastern Europe. A specific aim is, for instance, the extension of the UN Declaration of Human Rights to local languages and the organizing of seminars for certain groups.

"Independent human rights organizations and international organizations such as Amnesty International should have a stronger influence during peace negotiations to ensure human rights are taken into account in agreements. The former Yugoslavia will be a trial case for this," says Jannicke Heyerdahl-Larsen.

"It is not true that various groups of people can't live side by side. Even though we see a row of extreme ethnic conflicts, there are still a lot of countries where different nationalities live peacefully together. But it will demand tolerance and understanding for what is different from oneself - something which is our aim to promote," says the Secretary General of Amnesty International's Norwegian Section.

4. MDE 12/WU 03/93
25 JUNE 1993

INTERNAL

The following is being faxed to international media and Egyptian media on Monday 28 June. Please see note in News Initiatives section for details.

EXTERNAL

EGYPT: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S SECRETARY GENERAL APPEALS IN CAIRO TO ORGANIZATION OF AFRICAN UNITY (OAU) SUMMIT TO PROTECT HUMAN RIGHTS

Amnesty International's Secretary General, Pierre Sané, will launch a six-point appeal to the OAU heads of state and governments to take decisive action to promote human rights, on Tuesday 29 June, in Cairo.

This is the first time Pierre Sané has visited Egypt as Amnesty International's Secretary General. He will be in Egypt from 28 June to 4 July and will be meeting Amnesty International members and other human rights activists. His visit coincides with the annual summit of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

At a press briefing organized by Amnesty International's International Secretariat, Pierre Sané will talk about Amnesty International's work on OAU members states, his reaction to the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna, from 14 to 25 June, and human rights questions in Egypt.

The press briefing will be at 1800 hrs (local time), on Tuesday 29 June at:

Conference Room
Atlas Zamalek Hotel
20 Gami't al-Duwal al-Arabiya Street
Mohandesine
Cairo
Tel: 346 4175/6569/5782
Fax: 347 6958

Please collect the six-point proposal and media materials from the press briefing, or contact the Press Office at Amnesty International's International Secretariat on Tel: +44 71 413 5810/5562.

5. MDE 12/WU 04/93
 EMBARGOED FOR 1800 HRS (CAIRO TIME), TUESDAY 29 JUNE 1993

ADDRESS TO PRESS CONFERENCE
 CAIRO 29 JUNE 1993
 by Pierre Sané, Secretary General, Amnesty International
 (CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)

Thank you for attending this press conference.

I have recently come from Vienna, from the World Conference on Human Rights.

I am deeply, deeply angry about what happened there.

A historic opportunity to resolve humanity's most pressing problems has been wasted.

180 governments from all parts of the world revealed themselves unable to agree on any practical steps to end repression or discrimination. They showed that political self-interest is more important to them than the lives of human beings.

They undermined the credibility of the United Nations. At this dangerous and volatile time, the UN remains our best hope for achieving internationally coordinated action on human rights.

They attacked the basic principle that all men, women and children are entitled to the same basic human rights: a principle not open to question.

Then, when they reaffirmed what was agreed half a century ago, they tried to present it as a success.

The World Conference on Human Rights was a disgrace to the international community.

I am angry, but I have not given up hope.

Yes, the World Conference revealed the hypocrisy and cynical manoeuvrings of governments.

But it also showed the vigorous growth of the worldwide human rights movement over the past 25 years.

More than 1,500 non-governmental organizations were represented in Vienna. And they showed the commitment and determination to tackle problems that the governments so sadly lacked.

It is our role to increase the pressure on governments until they abide by their human rights commitments.

And that is why I am here today.

I want to put pressure on the African heads of state and government who are at this very moment meeting here in Cairo at the OAU Assembly.

The OAU has made some positive achievements over the past 30 years.

It can be justly proud of its work to combat racism in southern Africa, to eliminate the last vestiges of colonialism, to protect refugees and to mediate conflicts.

But now it must do more.

It must end 30 years of silence on human rights violations in member states.

Too many people are dying in this continent of ours at the hands of the forces who are supposed to protect them.

They are dying in Somalia, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Sudan. They are dying in other African countries too.

In the 1990s, more than a quarter of African states have been responsible for unlawful killings, often in secret, often on a massive scale.

In most cases those responsible have escaped unpunished and even uncriticized.

It is time for the OAU to seize the initiative on human rights. To publicly condemn the guilty. To stand up for the victims.

The OAU must now address directly the gross human rights violations that underlie the poverty and internal conflict that ravage this continent. I have here a message for all OAU delegates that spells out six steps we regard as of the utmost importance. (COPIES AVAILABLE)

Egypt has a special responsibility here.

For the first time, both the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights and the OAU Assembly are being chaired by Egyptians.

Egypt has in the past proved itself unafraid of leading by example on the international stage.

This is a time when it should again take the lead and press for practical action.

Of course Egypt, like other countries in the region, faces serious problems of its own.

The security threat is grave. Innocent civilians are being mutilated and killed by groups who use violence to further political aims.

Amnesty International condemns these human rights abuses without reservation.

But the crimes of opposition movements can never justify governments themselves breaking the law.

A month ago Amnesty International released its report on Egypt.

It shows that the Egyptian government crackdown on Islamic militants has led to a dramatic increase in human rights abuse. It describes dozens of brutal and unlawful killings by members of the security forces. It details mass arrests, torture, unfair political trials and death sentences.

Since then two men have been hanged here.

When we protest against the killings, the torture, the hangings, we are often accused of lending our support to Islamic "fundamentalists".

Over its 30-year history, Amnesty has been accused of supporting terrorists when we intervened with the colonial powers on behalf of independence fighters.

We have been accused of supporting communists when we intervened with governments on behalf of members of left-wing opposition movements.

Today we are accused of supporting "fundamentalism".

Our position is simple.

Human rights are universal - they belong to everyone, regardless of their beliefs.

Wherever human rights violations occur we will expose them and campaign against them. And that includes countries such as Iran and Sudan.

I hope that the OAU summit will do better than the World Conference, by implementing real safeguards to protect human rights throughout Africa.

Its success will be not be measured in fine-sounding words, but in its impact on the lives of people across this continent.