
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 115/93

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - ISRAEL

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

****Israel - 14 September****

Please note the enclosed item on Israel will be issued to international media by the IS press office at midday on 14 September. Please use as you feel appropriate, while ensuring that coverage of Saudi Arabia is not jeopardized.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Saudi Arabia - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 105
Yugoslavia/Kosovo - 23 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 104/113
Sudan - 29 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88
Myanmar - 8 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111
EJEs and "Disappearances" - 20 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 113

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Zaire - 16 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111/113
North Korea - 1 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88
Togo - 5 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111
Francophone Summit - 11 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 111

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Iran - 3 November (International)
Venezuela - 10 November (International, linked to EJEs & Disappearances)

AI INDEX: MDE 15/WU 08/93
EMBARGOED FOR 14 SEPTEMBER 1993

ISRAEL AND THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR STRONG HUMAN RIGHTS SAFEGUARDS TO BE INCLUDED INTO PEACE SETTLEMENT

Amnesty International has called on the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to ensure that strong human rights safeguards are an integral part of any peace settlement between them.

In letters to Yitzhak Rabin, Prime Minister of Israel, and Yasser Arafat, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), Amnesty International urged that, as a minimum, both sides make an explicit and formal commitment to fully implement international human rights standards in the context of any agreement concerning the Occupied Territories. Such standards include the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; and the Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials. The organization also called for all law enforcement officials to receive adequate training in such standards.

No reference to human rights is contained in the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements signed by the Israeli Government and the PLO on 13 September 1993. This document envisages a situation in which, over a period of up to five years, Israeli forces as well as a Palestinian police force will be responsible for law enforcement in the Occupied Territories. Detailed arrangements are to be negotiated in a number of specific agreements.

In its appeals, Amnesty International has also urged the Israeli Government to address as a matter of urgency human rights issues including the detention or imprisonment of prisoners of conscience, specifically those accused solely of membership of Palestinian organizations; the continuing use of administrative detention; torture and ill-treatment; killings of Palestinian civilians; deportations; and the destruction of houses.

Amnesty International has also repeated its concerns about the arbitrary killings of Palestinians suspected of "collaborating" with the Israeli authorities and sought a commitment from the PLO not to introduce death penalty provisions in the Occupied Territories.

Amnesty International believes that full respect of human rights is an essential precondition for any lasting peace settlement.

ENDS/