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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 123/93

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 29 SEPTEMBER 1993

AI INDEX: NWS 11/123/93  
DISTR: SC/PO  
NO OF WORDS: 603

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Iran - 3 November (international)  
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Papua New Guinea - 19 November (targeted)

**\*\*Colombia - 16 March 1993\*\***

It has just been announced that congressional elections will take place in Colombia on 13 March 1994. It would be counter-productive for AI to launch a major campaign on Colombia shortly before that date, so the start date has been delayed by three weeks. Please note that the new launch date will be **Wednesday 16 March 1994**.

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**SPAIN: AI CONCERNED BY RECENT DEATHS IN CUSTODY AND REPORTS OF TORTURE**

Amnesty International is seriously concerned by allegations yesterday of the ill-treatment of a woman suspected of involvement in the armed Basque group ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna). These allegations come immediately after two deaths in custody of suspected ETA collaborators.

Maria José Lizarribar was arrested in the Basque region of Spain on Monday, 20 September. On Saturday, 25 September a judge reportedly ordered detailed photographs to be taken of her when she appeared in a Madrid court with her arms and legs covered in bruises. She had just spent five days in incommunicado detention under the special provisions of the anti-terrorist legislation. In court, she claimed she had been ill-treated by the Civil Guard in San Sebastian.

On Sunday, 26 September Xabier Galparsoro died in hospital, two days after falling from a second floor window of Bilbao's central police station. On Friday, 24 September Miren Gurutze Yanci, 31, died in police custody after being arrested in the Basque region the previous day. According to initial reports she was dead on arrival at the Madrid hospital to which she had been transferred from a Civil Guard station outside the city. The preliminary medical examination showed that she had apparently died of cardiac arrest following breathing difficulties. The results of further forensic tests are awaited.

Amnesty International has been concerned about reports of torture and ill-treatment by Spanish law enforcement officers for many years and, particularly, where detainees are held in extended incommunicado detention under anti-terrorist legislation. Under the current law, people suspected of belonging to an armed group can be held incommunicado for up to five days by judicial order. In accordance with its usual policy Amnesty International will investigate these new allegations and will be following very closely the judicial inquiries already opened into all three cases.

In the past judicial inquiries into allegations of torture and ill-treatment in Spain have been characterised by slowness and failure to bring officers to justice, even in the most serious cases. In the few cases where officers are sentenced, they almost never serve a prison sentence and are routinely pardoned and sometimes even promoted. In some cases officers convicted of torture or ill-treatment have continued to serve and have subsequently tortured again.

In April this year, the United Nations (UN) Committee Against Torture (CAT) criticized the use of extended incommunicado detention, which can directly contribute to torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officers. All three recent cases arise from incidents during incommunicado detention.

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