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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - PAKISTAN (For response only)
INTERNAL - Q&A on Asia Watch report on Indonesia

PLEASE NOTE: From today onwards we are beginning our news blackout before the launch of the Indonesia campaign. So although we will continue to send you items they will be for response only and we will not be releasing them to our media. The only exceptions to this are items on Haiti which we will continue to send to international media.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Indonesia - 0400 hrs GMT 28 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 215 FOR INFORMATION ABOUT PANEL AT PRESS CONFERENCE LAUNCH

France - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Algeria - 25 October - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

APEC - 3 November -SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Mali - 21 September - SEE NEWS SERVICES 212/94 AND 205/94

Turkey - 14 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

Iraq - 29 November - SEE NEWS SERVICE 212/94

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PAKISTAN:AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES FOR INQUIRY INTO "DISAPPEARANCE" OF OPPOSITION POLITICIAN

Amnesty International is urging the government of Pakistan to establish an independent and impartial investigation into the "disappearance" of the Secretary General of the Jammu and Kashmir People's National Party (JKPNP) in August.

Shaukat Ali Kashmiri is believed to have been taken into the custody of Pakistan's military intelligence department, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), on 26 August. He is reportedly being held at either Ojiri Military Camp near Rawalpindi or at Attok Fort, north east of Islamabad. However, the authorities have failed to account for his whereabouts or acknowledge his detention.

"We are asking the government to confirm the whereabouts of Shaukat Ali Kashmiri and ensure his safety, and to bring to justice those found responsible for his "disappearance", " Amnesty International said.

A "disappearance" is when a person has been taken into custody by or with the approval of the authorities who then deny that the victim is being held, according to Amnesty International. "Disappeared" people are often at risk of torture or extrajudicial executions.

" 'Disappearances' are a gross violation of fundamental human rights and we urge governments to take all possible measures to establish the whereabouts of the victim, to ensure their safety and freedom, and to bring the perpetrators to justice", Amnesty International said.

The organization has not yet received any formal response to its requests for information from the Pakistan government regarding Mr Kashmiri's "disappearance" and any measures taken by the government to establish his whereabouts and safety. Several government departments, including the local police station and the Federal Investigation Authority (FIA) have all denied holding Mr Kashmiri in their custody.

On 17 May, Mr Kashmiri was reportedly put on the 'exit control' list effectively banning him from leaving Pakistan. According to an FIA representative the decision to do this was made by the "highest authorities". Members of JKPNP maintain this ban was in response to Mr Kashmiri's speech at a conference on Kashmir organized in Brussels by the European Parliament, where he opposed the policies of the Government of Pakistan towards Azad Kashmir.

JKPNP members claim that Mr Kashmiri's abduction is yet another measure by Pakistani authorities to stop him from carrying out his political activities as the leader of the party. Before he "disappeared" Mr Kashmiri was reportedly set to take part in local election campaigns for JKPNP seats in northern areas of Gilgit and Baltistan, and also attend an international conference on Gilgit and Baltistan in London in September.

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INDONESIA AND EAST TIMOR: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON ASIA WATCH AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORTS

Q: Why have the two largest human rights organisations decided to release major reports on Indonesia and East Timor in the same month?

A: There has been much talk of political "openness" in Indonesia in recent years, but this has not led to an improvement in the human rights situation in Indonesia or East Timor. Because the violations are continuing, human rights organizations are campaigning for them to end.

What the timing of both reports reflects is the level of widespread international concern about human rights violations throughout Indonesia and East Timor which cover a broad range of issues.

But it is not just international organisations which are currently campaigning for an end to human rights violations in Indonesia and East Timor. The voices of those inside Indonesia calling for change are becoming louder and more frequently heard.

Q: Won't the Indonesian Government feel justifiably attacked by Westerners who are perhaps being "anti-Indonesian" with the launch of the two reports in the one month?

A: Firstly, Amnesty International is not a western organization -- our membership and campaigning is international, and the human rights we campaign for are universal.

Secondly, governments that campaign about the amount of criticism they receive about their human rights record are simply shooting the messenger. If they don't like the criticism, they should stop violating human rights.

It is also important to remember that many Indonesians are calling for an improvement in the human rights situation, and many of them are suffering violations as a result of their peaceful protest.

Q: Is there a difference between the two reports?

A: There is and this difference results from the different fields of work of the two organisations.

Amnesty International's mandate relates to specific violations of human rights, imprisonment of individuals for the peaceful expression of their beliefs, unfair trials, torture, political killings, "disappearances" and the death penalty.

Amnesty International's report looks at the historical pattern of different kinds of violations, political killings, torture and ill-treatment, political imprisonment and the death penalty, paying particular attention to the period since 1989. The report describes how the violations are systematic and have become institutionalised.

Human Rights Watch is also concerned with fundamental rights including political killings, torture, and political imprisonment. But the organisation looks at a broader range of issues, including the rights of workers to organise and restrictions on press freedom. This is reflected in their report.

Q: How does AI's work differ from that of Human Rights Watch/Asia?

A: Amnesty International is a membership based organisation. This means that members internationally will take action on human rights concerns in Indonesia and East Timor, through publicity, letter writing and lobbying of their own governments.

Human Rights Watch is an American based research and monitoring body which plays an extensive role in lobbying the US Government. Human Rights Watch/Asia has taken a particular interest in workers rights and the role that the US Government can play in pushing for improved workers conditions and rights.

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