
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 287/94

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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **BAHRAIN** (reactive item embargoed for 4 January, will be sent to Middle East interest media) **MEXICO** (will be distributed to media by delegation visiting Mexico)

MEDIA STRATEGY

The AI Worldwide Media Strategy consultation document has been sent to all sections in the weekly mailing, and a separate mailing is being done to section chairs and directors.

The process for the consultation and the specific questions that we are asking sections to address are included in the cover sheet for the document. Please note that official section responses will be discussed at the 11-13 February International Press Officers meeting. We look forward to your response at that time.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Sudan - 25 January - SEE NEWS SERVICES 275 AND 261

Turkey - 8 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 261

Northern Iraq - 28 February - SEE NEWS SERVICE 266

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

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EMBARGOED FOR 4 JANUARY 1994

BAHRAIN: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR URGENT HUMAN RIGHTS SAFEGUARDS
FOLLOWING MASS ARRESTS

Amnesty International is seriously concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation in Bahrain, following widespread disturbances last month, and is calling on the government to allow representatives of the human rights organization to visit the country at the end of this month.

Demonstrations -- sparked off by arrests made in connection with a petition calling on the Amir of Bahrain to reinstate parliament, suspended in 1975 -- have led to the fatal shooting of at least four demonstrators reportedly by members of the security forces, mass arrests, the continuing detention of hundreds of people including possible prisoners of conscience, and the reported torture of detainees.

Hundreds of people are now believed to be held in incommunicado detention under provisions of the State Security Law.

Amnesty International is calling for independent investigations to be carried out into the circumstances of the killings and for all those currently detained to be granted access to a lawyer of their own choosing, their family and medical attention where necessary. The organization is also requesting a list of names of all those currently held.

"The Government has not made public the names and whereabouts of those detained," Amnesty International said. "It is vital that basic human rights safeguards be put into place for detainees who may be at risk of torture".

This is not the first time Amnesty International has proposed talks with members of the Bahraini Government and requested permission for a fact-finding visit. During the last few years, the human rights organization has repeatedly raised its concerns with the Government, together with requests for a visit. Delegates have not been able to visit the country since 1987.

Among Amnesty International's proposed topics for discussion with the government are human rights safeguards, and the nature and application in practice of certain legislation -- particularly the State Security Measures of 1974 and the law regulating trial procedures before the Supreme Civil Court of Appeal, in its capacity as a state security court.

During its proposed visit, Amnesty International's delegates would also hope to meet separately others concerned with human rights including lawyers, judges and members of the medical profession.

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AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO VISIT MEXICO

In the wake of renewed conflict in the southern state of Chiapas, Amnesty International is visiting Mexico to investigate reports of recent human rights violations.

On 19 December hundreds of members and supporters of the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (EZLN), Zapatista National Liberation Army -- an armed opposition group composed mostly of Indian peasants -- took control of 38 municipalities and blocked eight highways in Chiapas.

Although the actions were carried out peacefully, subsequent movements of army troops in the region have raised fears about the imminent possibility of clashes between the army and the EZLN, and of an escalation of serious human rights violations in the region.

Last week Amnesty International called on the Mexican authorities and the EZLN to ensure full respect for the human rights of the population in Chiapas.

Amnesty International's delegation will be in Mexico from 31 December to 13 January 1995 and will consist of Dr Morris Tidball Binz, from the organization's International Secretariat in London, Gabrielle Iribarne from Amnesty International Canada, and Professor Jorgen L. Thomsen from Amnesty International Denmark, who is a pioneer in the field of forensic documentation of human rights violations.

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