

AI Index: NWS 11/13/92
Distr: SC/PO
No. of words: 960

Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 2 APRIL 1992

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 13/92

Contained in this weekly update is an external for response item on Tunisia.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

Please note - because of absences in the IS press office at a time when we are short-staffed anyway, we expect that there will be no news releases embargoed for the following weeks: 3 June, 17 June and 24 June 1992.

Togo - 8 April 1992 (New Information)

A document and targeted news release about impunity are scheduled for 8 April 1992, to coincide with the anniversary of a massacre on 10 April 1991. The news release has been sent to you.

Sudan - 15 April (New Information)

A document and news release, which the IS press office will be sending out to press contacts in the UK, Africa and the Middle East. The news release has now been sent to you.

Israel/Lebanon - 7 May

News release to accompany first detailed report on treatment and conditions of detainees in Khiam prison, south Lebanon.

Burundi - 13 May (New Information)

Targeted news release with short document, following recent mission to

Burundi.

China (Tibet) - 20 May 1992

A document and news release to go with a small-scale campaign.

Pakistan - 28 May

A document and targeted news release on arrests in Sind.

Annual Report - 9 July (New Information)

Thank you for your quick responses to our query about the embargo date. All responses were positive, so 9 July is the confirmed embargo date.

POSSIBLE NEWS INITIATIVES, STILL TO BE CONFIRMED

South Africa - date now possibly 10 June (New Information)

The research team is planning a document, but as yet cannot give a definite date. It will have an international news release and probably a questions and answers - the date has still not been fixed, although it is quite likely to be 10 June.

Turkey (New Information)

The planned news release on Turkey has been cancelled. A document on past abuses is planned, and weekly update items will keep you up-to-date with new developments.

NOTE RE: INDIA LAUNCH

It would be really useful for us to compile an analysis of the media coverage of the India Campaign Launch. Please could you assess how good the media coverage was in your country and detail what coverage you think was most important. In particular we are interested in finding out which images from the ENR were used - to improve future ENRs.

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2. MDE 30/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL FOR RESPONSE
2 April 1992

INTERNAL

The Tunisian government has issued a press statement to the international media, expressing willingness to co-operate with AI but also making several inaccurate claims about our recent report. This weekly update item answers the government's statements.

If any of the media in your countries have carried the Tunisian government's statement and you feel the report has been misrepresented, you may send this item to them in response. However, we obviously don't want media to run the story unless they have already done so, so don't send the item out except in response. Many thanks for your help on this one.

TUNISIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES COOPERATION, RESPONDS TO GOVERNMENT INACCURACIES

Amnesty International today wrote to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali welcoming the Tunisian government's statement on 30 March that it "stands ready to continue working with Amnesty International to ensure that all allegations of human rights abuses in Tunisia are accurately, thoroughly and fairly investigated". The organization repeated its offer to send a delegation to Tunisia to discuss the human rights concerns addressed in its recent report, Tunisia: Incommunicado detention and torture, and Amnesty International's recommendations towards redressing these violations.

In the letter Amnesty International reminded the President that the concerns described in the report had been raised repeatedly in letters and discussions with members of the Tunisian Government over the past year. They were placed on the public record after the Tunisian Government continued to reject the overwhelming evidence of the systematic use of prolonged incommunicado detention and torture in Tunisia.

The organization expressed its regret that the Tunisian Government's press release, rather than addressing Amnesty International's recommendations, attempted to cast doubt on the findings of the report. In fact, the press release made a number of incorrect references to AI's report.

The Tunisian Government's news release denies that Abdellatif Tlili

was ever arrested and states that Monji Jouini was not under arrest at the time he says he was tortured. However, the evidence available to Amnesty International indicates that Abdellatif Tlili was arrested on 21 November 1991 and severely tortured before being released without charge on 1 January 1991 and that Monji Jouini was arrested on 19 December 1991 and subsequently tortured, as alleged in his statement.

The Tunisian press release states that: "Najib Laamari was not killed under torture". Amnesty International has not in fact raised the case of Najib Laamari in any public statement. Following its normal practice, the organization sought clarification from the Tunisian Government after receiving reports that Najib Laamari had died in detention. However, his case was not included in Amnesty International's recent report on human rights violations in Tunisia. Nor has Amnesty International ever stated that Ajmi Lourimi "was blinded by torture", as suggested in the Tunisian Government's press release. In April and June 1991, Amnesty International made urgent appeals to the Tunisian Government after receiving information that Ajmi Lourimi had been tortured while held in prolonged incommunicado detention without charge or trial - from 5 April until 13 May 1991 - but without response.

Amnesty International's letter to President Ben Ali ends by asking the Tunisian President about any action taken by the Tunisian Government to carry out further investigations into the death of Faisal Barakat in the light of the sworn statement by a British Professor of Forensic Medicine given to the Tunisian ambassador in London on 3 March.

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DATE: 3 APRIL 1992

ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 13/92

Contained in this addition to the weekly update are external items on Ghana and the Isle of Man.

1. AFR 28/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
3 April 1992

INTERNAL

Please note that the case of Jacob Yidana is featured in the Worldwide Appeals section of the April 1992 Newsletter which was printed and distributed before his release. Please do not feature his case in section newsletters and halt all letter-writing actions on this case, where possible; ensure that the case is not used for future appeals.

EXTERNAL

GHANA: 2 PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE AND 15 OTHER POLITICAL PRISONERS RELEASED

Amnesty International welcomes the release of two prisoners of conscience, Major Courage Quarshigah and Jacob Yidana, by Ghana's ruling Provisional National Defence Council on 20 March 1992, together with 15 other political prisoners. However, the organization remains concerned that other political detainees continue to be held without charge or trial. Amnesty International considers that all such detainees should be brought to trial promptly on recognizably criminal charges or released.

Major Courage Quarshigah had been detained without charge or trial since September 1989 together with at least eight other prisoners, four of whom, Edward Akakpo, Alhaji Mohammed Abdulai Yusif, Joy Cudjoe and Simon Sablah, have not been released and remain in detention. They were accused of involvement in a plot to overthrow the government, but the authorities have failed to produce evidence to substantiate this accusation or to bring them to court.

Amnesty International had been campaigning on the case of Jacob Yidana for many years. A former Chief Superintendent of Police, he was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment for his alleged involvement in a coup attempt in November 1982, and transferred to administrative detention in July 1988. The use of administrative detention, to prevent his release at the end of his prison sentence, strongly suggested that the motive for his imprisonment was political. It has been alleged that his trial was unfair and that the real reason for his conviction was that he led an investigation into the murder of three judges and a retired army officer in June 1982 which implicated members of the government.

Other political prisoners released included Andrew Kwame Piani, an economist, businessman and former chief executive of the Cocoa Marketing Board. He was convicted in August 1983 of preparing to overthrow the government in connection with the November 1982 coup attempt, and was sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment. However, there appeared to be inadequate evidence to justify his conviction and he was not allowed to appeal against his sentence.

Also released was Bombardier Mustapha Mohamed, one of Ghana's longest held political prisoners, detained without charge or trial since December 1982. Other members of the armed forces were also released, including Corporal Stanley Okyere and three others who had been held without charge or trial since 1983.

Amnesty International had highlighted these and other cases in a report published in December 1991, in which it expressed concern at the continued use of political imprisonment and detention without trial to silence critics and opponents of the government in Ghana. Many political prisoners have been detained incommunicado and some, particularly those arrested and accused of subversion in the early and mid-1980s, were reportedly tortured and ill-treated.

Amnesty International urges the Ghanaian government to take steps to ensure that all remaining political detainees are released if they are not to be given fair trial without further delay on recognizably criminal charges. At the very least, all such detainees' cases should be the subject of a full judicial review, with the detainees being informed of the specific reasons for their detention and an adequate opportunity to challenge their detention, including through the provision of full rights of legal advice and representation. Amnesty International is also urging

the government to repeal the laws which allow unlimited detention without charge or trial.

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2. EUR 45/WU 03/92 EXTERNAL

3 April 1992

ISLE OF MAN/UNITED KINGDOM: PARLIAMENT VOTES TO LEGALIZE HOMOSEXUALITY

The Isle of Man parliament, the House of Keys, has voted to legalize homosexuality after a debate on the issue on 31 March. The approved amendments to the Sexual Offences Bill will decriminalize homosexual acts in private between consenting men over 21. Previously, the law allowed for the arrest, prosecution and imprisonment of consenting male adults engaging in homosexual acts in private, with sentences ranging from two years to life imprisonment.

In February, Amnesty International sent delegates on a fact-finding visit to the island to investigate existing legislation on homosexuality, and to discuss the matter with authorities. The organization wrote to the Chief Minister of the Isle of Man urging the House of Keys and the government to ensure that the island's legislation governing sexual offences will no longer permit the imprisonment of people for consensual homosexual acts between men in private, who would be considered by the organization to be prisoners of conscience.