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TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 15/91

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Iraq.

1a) NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

8 May - Africa

The news release to accompany the external document "Africa: Towards abolition of the death penalty" (AFR 01/01/91) was sent to press officers on 23 April and is being sent to African media.

9 May - Bahrain

A targeted news release for Middle East media on our concerns about arbitrary arrests and detention was sent to press officers yesterday.

The release is based on the external document Bahrain: Violations of human rights (MDE 11/01/91).

10 May - India

The international news release was sent to press officers yesterday. The document and release focus on arbitrary arrests and detention, torture under anti-terrorist laws, "disappearances" and extrajudicial executions. The report also covers abuses by armed Sikh secessionist groups. A questions and answers paper will be sent to press officers shortly. Because of delays in the approval of the news release, it is now not being translated into Urdu, Hindi or Punjabi.

28 May - 30th Anniversary

An advice to editors will be sent to the international agencies highlighting activities in several sections on or around 28 May.

4 June - China

A news release to mark the continuing trials of people arrested during the 1989 pro-democracy movement. A list of about 100 people already sentenced is being prepared.

11 June - United Kingdom

The first comprehensive report for some time on our concerns in the UK is being released. Given the recent release of the Birmingham Six and the detention of Iraqis and Palestinians during the Gulf War, we expect this report to receive a high profile. The international news release will highlight the common thread in all the abuses - the government's secrecy surrounding the violations and/or investigations and the widening crisis of confidence in human rights safeguards.

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10 July - Annual Report

Materials to accompany the annual report include an international news release, the annual report summary (with regional updates for 1991), an overall fact sheet and regional fact sheets and a questions and answers paper. The tentative dates for this material to be sent to sections are:

Annual report summary: 17 May (revised date)

Overall and regional fact sheets: 29 May

News release: 29 May

Regional updates for annual report summary: 31 May

1b) FORTHCOMING NEWSLETTER FOCUSES

May - 30th anniversary

June - AI's work in Europe

July - Prisoners of the month update

August - AI's work in the Americas

NOTE TO PRESS OFFICERS:

Publicity file:

Material from the publicity file was sent in advance to sections on 24 April. The complete publicity file with photos, further campaign stories and other extracts of letters will be sent to sections in the weekly mailing of 22 May.

Weekly Update NWS 11/15/91

2. MDE 14/02/91 EXTERNAL
2 May 1991

IRAQ: PROTECTION OF IRAQI ASYLUM-SEEKERS

Amnesty International welcomes reports that the Saudi Arabian government has decided to accept and shelter Iraqi asylum-seekers living in areas currently under American and Saudi control and that the United States government has pledged to ensure their continued protection. The organization is writing to the Saudi Government seeking confirmation of these reports.

Amnesty International has been gravely concerned about the fate of thousands of Iraqi civilians who fled into the area of southern Iraq occupied by forces of the US-led coalition in light of the ongoing withdrawal of such forces from the area. It believes they would be at certain risk of torture, "disappearance" or execution if they were to be returned to Iraqi government control.

Amnesty International has received reports of recent mass human rights violation by Iraqi government forces. They include summary executions of unarmed civilians, suspected government opponents and their alleged supporters in Iraq. The organization has also received reports indicating that some refugees who had returned to Iraq under the official amnesty announced on 5 April were being arbitrarily detained, executed or subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, including being deprived of food and water while detained.

In early April, Amnesty International appealed to the US government to guarantee that Iraqis now residing in areas under US control continue to be protected from human rights abuses by Iraqi government forces. It also expressed concern to the Kuwaiti and Saudi Arabian governments about their reported refusal at the time to provide asylum to Iraqi refugees. It said refusing entry to those who sought protection from possible serious human rights violations breached international law.

Amnesty International continues to urge the Kuwaiti government to allow Iraqi asylum-seekers to enter Kuwait. The organization is aware that the Kuwaiti government faces serious practical problems within its own country but said such circumstances did not lessen its obligation under international law.

The organization has also appealed to the international community and governments around the world to live up to their responsibility to help countries facing a large scale influx of refugees.