

AI Index: NWS 11/33/92
Distr: SC/PO

No. of words: 1279

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

DATE: 21 AUGUST 1992

WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 33/92

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Argentina and Colombia.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Uganda - 9 September

A report, news release, questions and answers and FOB (fold out brochure) to go with a campaign focusing on extrajudicial executions, detention and torture.

Indigenous Peoples' Campaign - 7 October

ENR

There will be an Electronic News Release video to go with the Indigenous Peoples' Campaign. If you would like a copy, please contact Anne Jenkins in the Audio-visual Department at the IS (Tel: 071 413 5585) by 24 August.

Discussions are currently under way at the IS about the media strategy for the report. We are currently considering media materials, speakers, how to present the material, etc. As this is the first time we have done a report like this, we would like your input and think there should be an opportunity to discuss problems in advance. If you are interested in a telephone conference call, please let us know.

Myanmar - 28 October

A document and news release on Myanmar, to go with a campaign to coincide with the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Turkey - 4 November

A document and news release to go with a section level action about a wide range of human rights violations, including torture, extrajudicial executions and "disappearances".

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Haiti - EMBARGO BROKEN(New Information)

A note was sent out to you on Wednesday night to inform you of the following. The Caribbean News Agency broke the embargo on Wednesday 19 August, and by Thursday evening the whole of the Caribbean was covering the story and US agencies were beginning to pick it up. Consequently, we lifted the embargo and sent it out to international agencies at 1000 hrs gmt yesterday.

Malawi - 3 September(New Information)

Targeted news release was sent to you last Friday.

CORRECTION

Please note correction to Malawi news release: 2nd paragraph, 3rd line should read, "..computer section of the Electricity Supply Commission of Malawi, the entire.." (not "the National Bank of Malawi").

Children/AI week - 21 October

A targeted news release on children to go with a Focus article in October.

Weekly Update NWS 11/32/92

2. AMR 13/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL

21 August 1992

ARGENTINA: CLARIFICATION OF ARTICLE ON ARMED ATTACK OF LA TABLADA BARRACKS

Amnesty International wishes to clarify information contained in the article "Amnesty International Asume la Defensa de los Presos de La Tablada", published in July 1992 in the Argentine magazine "El Porteño". The article refers to the organization's concerns regarding an armed attack on the Third Mechanised Infantry Regiment barracks at La Tablada in the Province of Buenos Aires in January 1989, by members of the Argentine group Movimiento todos por la Patria (All for the Fatherland), MTP.

Citing an interview in Argentina with a member of Amnesty International's German Section, the article says that Amnesty International claims there have been serious irregularities in the trial of MTP members and accuses the Argentine government of having delayed the procedures in order to have the case closed. The article goes on to state that Amnesty International will be referring the case to the Inter-american system for the protection of human rights and concludes with remarks allegedly made by the Amnesty International member about specific MTP members.

Amnesty International wishes to make clear the organization's policy that official statements related to such concerns as fair trials originate at the organization's International Secretariat in London. Furthermore it wishes to make clear that Amnesty International has not commented on the fairness of the trial of MTP members who participated in the attack on La Tablada. It has not stated that the Argentine authorities delayed the judicial proceedings surrounding the case. Nor has it made any statement about the activities of individual members of the MTP. The organization also wishes to make clear that it has not considered referring the case to the bodies of the Inter American System for the Protection of Human Rights.

Amnesty International investigated the events at La Tablada after reports that grave human rights violations had occurred in the aftermath of the assault on the barracks. There was evidence that some MTP members may have been summarily executed after having surrendered; that three others "disappeared" after having been captured; that after the surrender they were subjected to torture.

Amnesty International has consistently expressed concern to the Argentine authorities about shortcomings of the criminal investigations, in particular their failure to resolve the issue of whether some MTP detainees were extrajudicially executed or "disappeared" after surrendering. The organization has recommended that an independent commission of inquiry should be established to impartially investigate the allegations and has reiterated its concern about the slow progress in investigating torture complaints.

Amnesty International delegates observed sessions of the trial in September and October 1989 against 20 MTP members, among them seven people who did not participate in the assault on the barracks. All 20 were found guilty of aggravated illicit association, rebellion, homicide and other charges. They were given sentences ranging from 10 years' to life imprisonment. Amnesty International recognized that the members of the MTP involved in the armed attack on the barracks committed serious offences, but stated that the actions of armed opposition groups can never be used by governments to justify violations of human rights. In its conclusion the organization stated that the judicial inquiries failed to obtain important evidence from the barracks that would have helped to ascertain the time, place and manner of death of all those who perished and that autopsy procedures were not of a sufficiently high standard to help determine whether particular deaths had occurred in combat or were the result of extrajudicial executions after surrender. Amnesty International has continued to monitor the cases of some MTP members who did not participate in the attack on the barracks.

AI's position on the events at La Tablada and the handling of the case by the Argentine judiciary is to be found in Argentina: The Criminal Investigation into the Attack on the Third Infantry Regiment of La

Tablada (AI AMR 13/02/89) issued in June 1989; Argentina: The Attack on the Third Infantry Regiment Barracks at La Tablada: Investigations into Allegations of Torture, "Disappearances" and Extrajudicial Executions (AI Index AMR 13/01/90), issued in March 1990; Argentina: Follow Up on the Criminal Investigation into the Attack on the Third Infantry Regiment of La Tablada (AI Index AMR 13/01/91), issued in March 1991.

Weekly Update NWS 11/32/92

2. AMR 23/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL

21 August 1992

COLOMBIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES VISIT COLOMBIA

Two Amnesty International representatives are visiting Colombia from 21 August to 11 September to carry out research into matters relevant to the organization's mandate. The delegation is composed of two staff members of Amnesty International's International Secretariat: a legal adviser and the researcher.

The delegates will be gathering information in order to evaluate whether any progress has been made by the government of César Gaviria Trujillo in improving respect for human rights since the introduction of a new Constitution in 1991. The delegation will be meeting government officials as well as human rights groups and other non-governmental organizations both in Santafé de Bogotá and outside the capital.

In accordance with the normal policy and procedures for such a visit, Amnesty International's delegates may speak publicly about the work of Amnesty International in general but they are not authorized to make any public statement about the content of their discussions in Colombia. On their return they will report on the results of their visit to the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International.

Anyone requiring further information about Amnesty International's work in Colombia should contact the Press Office at Amnesty International's International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, telephone (44) (71) 413 5500.