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Amnesty International
International Secretariat
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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 42/91

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

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

Djibouti - 6 November

A targeted news release for African and French-speaking media, based on a memorandum sent to the government to be sent to sections this week. This is the first major document on Djibouti. The summary is available in English; the rest of the document is only available in French.

The external item in this Weekly Update refers to a response to the memorandum by the Djibouti government, received today, too late to be incorporated into the document or news release.

Peru - 21 November

Peru - Human rights in a climate of terror AMR 46/56/91

Please see the detailed note sent to sections last week about new materials.

14 November - Francophone summit

The Francophone sections are coordinating a project to coincide with the Francophone summit being held in Paris from 19 to 21 November. A special document has been prepared by the sections on our concerns in Francophone countries, focusing on the theme of freedom of expression and freedom of conscience, thought and religion; a targeted news release is planned for a few days before the event; and an AI delegation will be present in Paris at the time of the summit. For further information, please contact the project coordinator, Daniel Bolomey, in the Swiss Section.

27 November - Refugee concerns in Europe

Leading up to the meeting of European leaders in the Netherlands in December, we will be releasing a report on our concerns about the treatment of asylum seekers in Europe in the context of European political and economic harmonization. This will be of particular interest to European media; we would be interested in hearing from any European section press officers who have issued news releases on this subject in the past so that we don't use the same news angle. Could you please also ensure that your section refugee coordinators are aware of this publication date.

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2. AFR 23/WU 03/91 EXTERNAL
5 November 1991

DJIBOUTI: GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO AI REPORT

The government of Djibouti today responded to an Amnesty International report condemning torture in Djibouti by denying that torture is routine in the country.

The government's response was received the day before publication of an AI report calling for effective safeguards against torture and other human rights abuses in Djibouti.

Djibouti's Minister of Justice, Ougoure Hassan Ibrahim, denied that torture had been systematically practised in Djibouti and said that AI had accepted reports of human rights violations uncritically.

The report is in fact based on on-the-spot investigations and medical examinations in Djibouti, and shows that torture had been routine despite certain legal safeguards which were evidently inadequate to prevent it. AI is appealing to the government to take all necessary measures to eradicate torture once and for all.

Amnesty International welcomes the minister's statement that he is studying the possibility of certain reforms which AI recommended. AI is urging that these should be adopted into law without delay, and that the ratification by Djibouti of international and African human rights treaties should be completed as soon as possible.

The response from the government came in reply to an Amnesty International memorandum on human rights in Djibouti. This was compiled after an AI visit to Djibouti in April 1991, and was submitted to the President of the Republic of Djibouti in September 1991. The government's reply arrived too late to be incorporated into the report being published on 6 November, which contains this memorandum.

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ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 42/91

Contained in this addition to the weekly update is an external item on Morocco.

Weekly Update NWS 11/42/91 add

1. MDE 29/WU 12/91 EXTERNAL
7 November 1991

MOROCCO: LATEST RELEASES FROM TAZMAMERT

News has come in this week that the remaining military detainees held incommunicado at Tazmamert for 18 years have now been released and reunited with their families.

Those released include Abdelaziz Binbine, who was sentenced to 10 years' imprisonment in 1972. Abderrahmane Sadki, who was sentenced to three years' imprisonment in 1972 and who was at one time reported to have died in custody, was also released. Mohamed Chellat, who was serving a sentence of life imprisonment, also appears to have been released.

Out of the 61 members of the armed forces believed to have been transferred from Kenitra Central Prison to the secret detention centre of Tazmamert on 7 August 1973, no less than 30 are believed to have died in custody, 29 at Tazmamert itself and one, Hamid Bendourou, after being transferred from Tazmamert in September 1991. Twenty-nine of the 61 are believed to have been released in recent weeks while two, Mohamed Raiss and Achour Ghani, who are serving a life sentence, have been moved back to Kenitra Central Prison and have at last been permitted access to their families. They are reported to be in very poor physical condition.