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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 61/93

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on India and an external (for response only) item on Denmark.

Please note: Just to alert you to a new document on Uzbekistan being issued by the Research Department - there is no media initiative to go with it and it will not be sent to international media. However, it was sent in last week's weekly mailing called: Uzbekistan: Clampdown on dissent, AI Index: EUR 62/09/93, in case you receive any queries.

NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

UN WORLD CONFERENCE-RELATED NEWS INITIATIVES ONLY THROUGHOUT JUNE

\*\*WORLD CONFERENCE ON HUMAN RIGHTS NEWS\*\*(New Information)

PLEASE NOTE: The Dalai Lama has accepted AI's invitation to speak in the AI Tent, in the park in front of the Austria Centre. He will speak at 1800 hrs today - there may be last-minute changes as to where he speaks because the Austrian Government is trying to arrange an alternative room in the Austria Centre and we do not know which he would prefer.

PLEASE NOTE: The fax number is not working in the Vienna Press Office, but the following numbers appear to be working as telephone lines at present: +43 222 219 35221/3574/3573. They are having technical problems with the lines and that is why these numbers keep changing.

Amnesty International's press office in Vienna will be based at AI's tent outside the Austria Centre and will be open for 24 hours each day. AI's press team will be staying at Pension Dr Geissler, Postgasse 14, 1010 Vienna. Telephone: +43 1 533 2803.

The strategy team in Vienna will report developments to sections via the IS press office to section press officers. Can press officers ensure that this information is circulated to the relevant people in their section.

General enquiries from press officers should go to Paula and James at the IS Press Office, on Tel: +44 71 413 5562/5810.

The second and third ENRs for the World Conference; Challenge to Governments, (Ref: 1838) and AI Activities Compilation, (Ref: 1840) are ready. Please order copies and refer journalists for copies from: Dubbs Copying House, giving the correct video reference number (as above) on Tel: +44 71 629 0055 or

Fax: +44 71 287 8796.

Annual Report - 0006 hrs gmt, 8 July

PLEASE NOTE: It is VERY important that the annual report news release does not get leaked to the media over the next two weeks - in view of the pessimistic reference to the UN World Conference. Please be careful not to let it be seen by too many people until after the World Conference is over.

Annual Report Summaries, Regional Updates, ENR and news release have all been sent to you.

Indonesia (Aceh) - 28 July

Document and news release to go with action on massive numbers of political killings.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Saudi Arabia - 1 July

A weekly update item is being written to go with the document: Saudi Arabia: An Upsurge in Public Executions, AI Index: MDE 23/04/93. The document and weekly update item will be embargoed for 1 July and will be sent out to selected international media by the IS Press Office. Please note that the document has been sent out in the weekly mailing.

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2. ASA 20/WU 05/93 EXTERNAL

15 June 1993

INDIA: DEATHS AND TORTURE AT THE HANDS OF SECURITY FORCES ON THE INCREASE IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

Masroof Sultan, a 19 year-old college student from Batamaloo, Jammu and Kashmir, survived brutal torture and narrowly escaped death at the hands of the paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) who took him into custody on 8 April 1993.

Despite repeated appeals from Amnesty International, reports indicate a sharp rise in custodial killings in Jammu and Kashmir: since mid-1992 civil liberties groups and newspapers have reported that dozens of Kashmiri men are killed in military and paramilitary custody every month after being tortured.

Masroof Sultan had been left for dead when he was found by the Kashmir police. The police had been told by the BSF that evening that one or more dead bodies of militants, killed in an exchange of fire between two militant groups, were lying at Solina.

In a detailed statement, Masroof Sultan described how he was taken into custody by the BSF on 8 April 1993 when the bus he was travelling on was stopped and searched. He says he was beaten by four soldiers and, along with three other young men, taken to a building where four men in BSF uniform tried to force him to admit he was a militant. When he refused, he was stripped, his hands and knees were tied together, he was hung from a pole by his knees and was beaten until his leg was broken. He said that a senior officer, on hearing that he had refused to admit he was a militant, told his torturers to "carry on".

Orders were given to take him to Papa II, an interrogation centre near Srinagar from where torture is often reported. Unable to move, he was blindfolded and put in a van: "When I was in the gypsy [van] I heard my parents [who had managed to locate him] crying. But they took sticks and beat my mother. The security forces men told me look at her, it's the last time you'll see her, after that you will die".

In Papa II, he alleges, metal rings and wires were attached to his body and he was given electric shocks ten or 12 times, on his toes, his right arm, legs and other sensitive parts of his body, until he started bleeding from the nose and lost consciousness. He was taken to a jeep, where he was told: "Last night in Batmaloo four of our persons were killed. We know that you are innocent, but we have to kill you [because] our four persons have been killed."

After travelling for about an hour, he was dragged out of the jeep, stood against a tree, and fired upon by the security forces. "They hit my legs first," Masrood said, "I fell down." After ten minutes, they came back and found him still alive. An officer told one of the BSF men to shoot him in the heart, but the shot, hitting Masrood Sultan in his chest, again was not fatal. "You bastard what are you doing, why are you misfiring?" Masrood Sultan heard the officer saying to the man who had tried to kill him. He says he was then shot a third time and hit in the neck and survived by pretending to be dead. He believes that three others were killed near the same spot, but their bodies have not been found.

Doctors treating Masroof Sultan in Srinagar said he received at least five bullet injuries, being hit on the left side of his chest just above the heart, the left side of the neck, his right arm and in both his legs. Masrood Sultan was also examined in the Bone and Joint Hospital in Srinagar by a foreign doctor, who confirmed he had open gunshot wounds on both of his thighs, his right elbow, the left armpit and in the back of his head. He also found injuries consistent with the alleged beating, electrical torture and shooting.

A report in The Kashmir Times of 26 April 1993 says that according to police records 132 persons were

killed in custody in the preceding 33 days alone. The Independent, London, of 25 March 1993, asked a senior Kashmiri official about increasing reports of custodial death and quotes him as saying: "Yes they're killing them. Maybe it's because the jails are full - or they want to frighten people." Even policemen are alleged to have been tortured and killed in custody (see Amnesty International UA 20/23/93).

The security forces often say that people who have died or "disappeared" in custody have been killed in "cross fire" with militants. However, Masrood Sultan's testimony clearly illustrates that such statements have been used to cover-up the atrocities.

Amnesty International is urging the Indian authorities immediately to order an independent and impartial inquiry into the alleged torture and attempted killing of Masrood Sultan and for those responsible to be identified and brought to justice without delay. The organization has also expressed concern to the Indian Government about reports of: deliberate killings of unarmed civilians by members of the security forces; widespread allegations of torture and rape by members of the security forces; and about arbitrary arrests of suspected separatists, an increasing number of whom are reported to have "disappeared" or to have died in custody.

Rajesh Pilot, the Minister of State for Home Affairs and the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Krishna Rao, have both stated that every custodial death would have to be accounted for and that the sternest possible action would be taken by the authorities against those guilty of this crime. However, such action is rarely, if ever, taken. Investigations into allegations of human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir are usually carried out by police or army officials rather than by an independent and impartial body, their findings are almost never published and prosecutions are very rare. In November 1992 the government said that action was taken against 230 members of the security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, but has still failed to give details.

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3. EUR 18/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL FOR RESPONSE ONLY  
15 June 1993

DENMARK: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VISITS DENMARK

In accordance with its normal function of monitoring events related to human rights and investigating incidents of possible human rights violations, Amnesty International is visiting Denmark following violent protests in Copenhagen on 18 and 19 May.

The International Secretariat of Amnesty International, based in London, noted that a number of police officers were injured and protesters were shot and injured during the violent protests which followed the Danish referendum on the Maastricht treaty.

Amnesty International is in the process of gathering information from a number of sources (including journalists, lawyers, other human rights organizations, witnesses, and government officials) about this incident and other human rights issues. To this end, the International Secretariat of Amnesty International is sending a member of staff of the International Secretariat, Jill Heine, an American lawyer, to Denmark on 17 June.

In accordance with Amnesty International's policy, Jill Heine is not authorized to make any public statements, and on her return will report the results of her investigations to the International Executive Committee of Amnesty International.