
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

NEWS SERVICE 137/94

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 27 JUNE 1994 NO OF WORDS:842

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - DENMARK, LIBERIA (for response only)

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

United Kingdom - 14 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

Pakistan - 27 July - PLEASE NOTE NEW DATE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 81/94

Myanmar - 20 July - PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASE SEE NEWS SERVICE 99/94

India - 16 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 129/94

**** Kosovo - 20 September **** - Document and news release to accompany section level action on ill-treatment of Albanians. Document coming in weekly mailing of 22 August.

**** Algeria - first week of October **** - Will let you know the finalised date asap. Document and news release on killings by security forces to accompany section level action.

**** France - second week of October **** - Will let you know the finalised date asap. More details to follow.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Lusophone Summit - 27 June - PLEASE NOTE - This summit has been postponed. Hold on to the news service item, we will let you know when the summit is rescheduled. SEE NEWS SERVICE 124/94 for item

Equatorial Guinea - 30 June - SEE NEWS SERVICE 135.

North and South Korea - 21 July - SEE NEWS SERVICE 135

**** Brazil - 14 September**** - Document and news service item to go with section level action. Release date is about three weeks before first round of presidential elections in October. Document focuses on police ill-treatment and will go in weekly mailing of 10 August.

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Annual Report - 0600 hrs GMT 7 July 1994 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 51/94

News Service 137/94

AI INDEX: EUR 18/WU 05/94
27 JUNE 1994

DENMARK: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES SUSPENSION OF LEG-LOCK

A week after Amnesty International released a report condemning ill-treatment by police in Denmark the country's justice minister has suspended the use of a police technique commonly known as the leg-lock.

"We've been asking for concrete action to tackle ill-treatment by police," Amnesty International said, "and we're glad that the Danish Government has so quickly taken steps in the right direction."

In its report on police ill-treatment release last week, the organization said that the leg-lock is a particularly painful and dangerous way of restraining people and amounted to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

The report documented cases in which detainees were forced face down on the ground and handcuffed behind their backs, with one of their feet locked behind the opposite knee and the other foot forced up under the handcuffs.

Many of the people who had been held in this position reported that they suffered abrasions or swelling of the wrists, and several suffered numbness in their hands and fingers. Some people said that these symptoms had lasted for months.

A forensic expert consulted by Amnesty International stated that the use of a less severe form of the leg-lock in the USA had been the cause of death of some detainees. The head of Denmark's Forensic Medical Council also said this month that the Danish leg-lock was dangerous, and could be life-threatening under some circumstances.

Amnesty International also welcomes the Justice Minister's announcement that Danish authorities will review other methods of force and restraint used by law enforcement officials. It hopes that this investigation will be a part of a wide ranging independent inquiry into the methods of force and restraint used by Danish law enforcement officials.

The organization also said that it hopes the Danish Government will act quickly on the other recommendations in its report including

- conducting independent impartial investigations into all allegations of ill-treatment by police
- bring perpetrators of ill-treatment to justice
- pay compensation to victims for the ill-treatment and injuries suffered
- set up a fully independent complaints procedure for allegations of ill-treatment.

News Service 137/94

AI INDEX: AFR 34/WU 01/94
27 JUNE 1994

LIBERIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL VISIT TO LIBERIA

Two Amnesty International representatives will be investigating human rights violations in Liberia from 8 to 21 July and hope to meet with government officials.

The representatives are Dr Stephen Ellis, director of the African Studies Centre in Leiden, the Netherlands, and Ms Binaifer Nowrojee, a Kenyan lawyer and human rights consultant.

Amnesty International's main concern in Liberia has been political killings and extrajudicial executions by government forces and deliberate and arbitrary killings by armed factions. An estimated 150,000 people -- mostly civilians -- are believed to have died since late 1989, most killed because of their ethnic origins. The peace accord of July 1993, the presence of UN military observers and an expanded African peace-keeping force has not been able to ensure disarmament of the armed factions.

"Fighting is escalating between the various armed groups, some of which have sprung up since the peace accord", Amnesty International said. "We are also seeing an increase in the number of civilians killed on suspicion of supporting the other side."

In accordance with Amnesty International's normal policy during such visits, the organization's representatives do not expect to make public statements about their findings in Liberia nor announce the content of their discussions with the Liberian authorities.

Anyone requiring more information about Amnesty International's work in Liberia should contact the Press Office at Amnesty International's International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, telephone +44 71 413 5810.

ENDS/