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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 09/93

Contained in this weekly update are an external item on Togo and internal items on India and the Nobel Peace Prize Winners mission.

NEWS INITIATIVES

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Australia - \*1301 hrs gmt 10 February\*

Please note that the embargo has been confirmed for 1301 hrs gmt, Wednesday 10 February for the news release and document on Aboriginal deaths and ill-treatment in custody.

\*Japan - 0500 hrs gmt, 17 March\*

Please note the embargo is confirmed for 0500 hrs gmt, 17 March for this document on refugee issues and we anticipate a high level of media interest in this news release. The Japanese Section requested the change in embargo to allow them to translate the document in time for a press briefing they will hold in Tokyo.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Sri Lanka - 12 February

A weekly update (enclosed in yesterday's weekly update) and document about the Sri Lankan government's implementation of AI's recommendations, to coincide with the Human Rights Commission in Geneva. The Research Dept feel that it would be very helpful if high profile newspapers in Europe ran pieces on it - probably more feature based than news. The IS Press Office plans to send it to selected media. The document was be sent out in yesterday's Weekly Mailing.

Algeria - early March

A document is currently being prepared. There may be a weekly update to coincide with it.

Section Initiatives

French Section - International Diary

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The French Section is producing a diary which will be sold in bookshops and through their catalogue. They would appreciate it if each section sent one black and white negative or slide representing an interesting image for human rights - in order to have a really international diary. They need about 53 photographs. Please send your contribution to Dominique Dupont-Viau, Publications and Trade Officer at the Paris Section Office.

#### French Section - European Press Officers' Meeting

The second European Press Officers' meeting will take place in Paris this year. The registration forms have not arrived yet, but when they do please send them to Luisa de Soriano or Josette Debord at the French Section Press Office before the end of February. The date of this meeting is now fixed for 15 and 16 May as the majority of you asked for. It will be focused on two themes: Audiovisual work (production and TV experiences) and how to improve it; and the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna. The French Section Press Office will send the program to all participants during the last week of February. Many thanks.

#### Audio-visual News - World Conference on Human Rights

To help in preparing packages of video material for use in connection with the World Conference on Human Rights, the Media Unit would be most grateful if you could advise whether your section would be able to provide video footage under the following categories:

- 1) Footage of AI section and group campaigning activities and background footage illustrating the cities and towns in which these activities took place and the volunteers who undertook it;
- 2) Footage illustrating uses to which Electronic News Releases released by the Media Unit have been put by TV stations in your country or footage of press conferences held by your section;
- 3) Footage demonstrating the effectiveness of AI work through interviews with released prisoners or others in a position to confirm the effectiveness of our campaigning methods;

Ideally, footage in categories 1 and 3 should be freely available for international use and have no copyright restrictions attached. Footage in category 2 can be in the form of off-air recordings.

If your section has some footage to offer or has advice on where to acquire it, please contact Adam Lloyd in the Media Unit in the first instance. Your help in assisting this footage research effort will be much appreciated.

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2. AFR 57/WU 01/93 EXTERNAL

4 February 1993

TOGO: RECENT KILLINGS OF PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATORS UNDERLINE NEED FOR URGENT STEPS TO END SECURITY FORCE IMPUNITY

Amnesty International is concerned by a wave of recent killings by Togolese security forces, including the shooting of at least 16 unarmed demonstrators in Lomé on 25 January.

"The situation has been aggravated by the authorities' repeated failure to hold the security forces accountable before the law for their actions," said the organization.

Security forces reportedly opened fire without warning, killing at least 16, possibly as many as 24 demonstrators and wounding more than 50 others. No steps are known to have been taken by the authorities to initiate a public investigation into these killings or to identify and bring those responsible to justice.

Opposition politicians organized the demonstration on 25 January to show their support for a visit to Lomé by French and German government ministers. The ministers were apparently trying to resolve the political deadlock between Togo's Head of State, General Gnassingbé Eyadéma, and other branches of government.

Journalists and the French and German ministers went to the hospital morgue and saw the bodies of demonstrators who had been killed. In a press interview, the visiting ministers said they had advised President Eyadéma to return the army to the barracks to stop it interfering in the political domain. They urged that a commission of inquiry be established to identify and punish those responsible for the killings - but no such inquiry has been announced by the authorities.

In the next few days there were violent exchanges between the security forces and some civilian opponents of the government, resulting in further deaths - including the death of one soldier and one gendarme. On 30 January, the security forces shot dead at least 5 people, including an 11-year-old child, when firing indiscriminately at civilians.

According to President Eyadéma, he has instructed the Minister of Defence to initiate an inquiry into the violent events of 30 January - though the President himself had previously appeared to condone the security forces' action as retaliation for the deaths of the soldier and gendarme. The Procuracy has ordered autopsies to be carried out on those killed on 25 and 30 January. The authorities' failure to initiate any public investigation of the killings on 25 January - in contrast to the announcement about the killings on 30 January, where one of the victims was a French national - also suggests that these killings are condoned by the Presidency.

Amnesty International fears there may be further extrajudicial executions if the military forces continue to be allowed to act with impunity - both because the killers are still at large and because the measures necessary to prevent these gross abuses are not being identified or implemented. In mid-1992, the Presidency took no steps to investigate the findings of a French-based human rights organization - which concluded that the army, with complicity at the highest levels, probably planned and carried out an assassination attempt on Gilchrist Olympio, a leading opposition figure, in May 1992.

Amnesty International is now repeating its call to the Togolese authorities to take urgent steps to prevent further killings by the security forces. In particular, Amnesty International urges the immediate establishment of an impartial and independent investigation into all the recent killings. International standards and the government's own responsibilities under national law both require that such an inquiry be set up by the Togolese Government. The personal safety of those carrying out any such inquiry must

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be ensured, the investigating body must be capable of acting on its own initiative and must have adequate staff and resources to carry out the investigation. It is also vital that the investigating body has the authority to obtain all information necessary to its inquiry - with access to relevant medical documentation concerning those who died and records concerning the deployment of members of the security forces.

The investigation's findings should be made public and should identify those responsible for unlawful killings or other abuses in order that they can be brought to justice. They should also identify the steps that need to be taken to prevent abuses recurring. Official investigations, whether by the Procuracy or a special commission of inquiry would give a clear signal to the security forces that the killing of peaceful demonstrations is unlawful and that those responsible will no longer behave with impunity.

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3. ASA 20/WU 02/93 INTERNAL FOR RESPONSE

4 February 1993

INDIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SEEKS CLARIFICATION OF OFFER TO VISIT PUNJAB

Amnesty International has welcomed reports that the Chief Minister, Beant Singh, has said that the organization may visit Punjab. Amnesty International will now be seeking clarification about his statement from India's central government in New Delhi. It is understood that authorization from central government would be required for the organization to visit any Indian state.

Amnesty International will also be seeking information about the terms for such a visit, stressing that while Amnesty International does work for an end to abuses committed by armed opposition groups, its primary focus is on human rights violations committed by governments.

The organization will also be seeking clarification about outstanding requests it has made to visit a number of other Indian states, including Jammu and Kashmir and states where there is no armed opposition.

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4. ASA 16/WU 01/93 INTERNAL  
4 February 1993

Please draw this to the attention of Myanmar Coordinators.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO PARTICIPATE IN NOBEL LAUREATES DELEGATION

Amnesty International will participate in a delegation of Nobel Peace Prize Laureates seeking to visit Myanmar (Burma) to appeal for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Suu Kyi, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991, has been held without charge or trial since July 1989 and has been adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

The Nobel Laureates will assemble in Bangkok on 16 February and hope to proceed to Yangon (Rangoon) to present their appeal to Myanmar's military government, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). If refused entry to Myanmar, the delegation will visit Burmese refugees in Thailand and hold a press conference in Bangkok.

The delegation has been organized by the International Institute for Human Rights and Democratic Development, an independent, non-governmental organization created at the initiative of the Canadian Parliament and based in Montréal. Other Nobel Laureates taking part in the delegation include Oscar Arias, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Mairead Corrigan-Maguire and Adolfo Perez Esquivel. Amnesty International will be represented by Ross Daniels of Australia, Chair of the organization's International Executive Committee. It is hoped that this project will give fresh impetus to international concern for human rights in Myanmar.

Following the press conference in Bangkok, some members of the delegation will proceed to Geneva, where they hope to present their statement to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, currently in session. Amnesty International will not be taking part directly in the Geneva aspect of the project, but will draw upon the additional attention generated by the Nobel Laureates to support our efforts at the Commission to achieve the objectives described in Amnesty International's concerns at the 49th session of the UNCHR (AI Index: IOR 41/10/92) and supplements.

Amnesty International has no new information about the health of Aung San Suu Kyi (please refer to UA 379/92). Suu Kyi has consistently refused to accept food and other necessities from the authorities, and her resources are now running out. Although some 1200 political prisoners have reportedly been released over the last nine months, some 1500 more remain in detention and arrests continue to occur. In late January the SLORC announced the arrest of over a dozen people in December 1992 for producing anti-government leaflets and posters, and "instigating false rumours", and arrests have reportedly continued in January. On 1 February the SLORC reconvened the National Convention, which is meant to establish principles for drafting a constitution. However, the SLORC insists on a primary role for the military in any new government. The Convention was postponed in January after only two days amid speculation that some of the Convention's delegates were strongly opposed to such a condition.

Sections and groups with Myanmar cases are encouraged to take advantage of the publicity and lobbying opportunities created by the Nobel Laureates delegation to advance Amnesty International's campaigning objectives on Myanmar, in particular those related to our UNCHR strategy and the concerns and recommendations contained in 'No law at all': Human Rights Violations under military rule (AI Index: ASA 16/11/92). Copies of the Nobel Laureates' Press Statement will be made available to Sections through a subsequent Weekly Update as soon as possible.