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Amnesty International
International Secretariat
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TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 22/92

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Romania and Togo.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

International News Releases

South Africa - 10 June

International news release and questions and answers to go with publication on security force involvement in torture and political killings since the start of reforms.

People's Republic of China - 4 June

Weekly Update item contained in this weekly update to correspond with the anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.

Greece - 24 June

International news release to go with a publication on ill-treatment.

Annual Report - 9 July

PLEASE NOTE - The Annual Report updates were sent to you yesterday. The AI Index is POL 10/06/92.

The embargo time is confirmed at 1300 hrs gmt. After the event we will be asking you for feedback about how the media coverage was, particularly in the light of the changed time.

The Annual Report summaries have now been sent to you.

Targeted News Items/Weekly Updates

Rwanda - 4 June

Weekly Update item coming in an addition to this weekly update later in the week to go with document on Rwanda.

Nepal - 17 June

Weekly Update item contained in this weekly update to go with a document on Nepal.

UNCONFIRMED NEWS INITIATIVES

USA - possibly June/July

The research team is working hard on a document about police brutality in Los Angeles. Because of the recent international publicity about the subject, we hope to bring the report out sooner than expected with a news release - though the tentative date of 18 June no longer stands. We are also currently working on a questions and answers on the subject which should be with you next week.

Indigenous People's Campaign

Discussions are currently under way at the IS about the media strategy for the report, which will have an embargo date in September/October. 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 conference call, please let us know.

SECTION NEWS INITIATIVES

British Section - Peru press briefing

The British Section held a press briefing on Monday 1 June to launch the report: Peru: Human rights during the government of President Alberto Fujimori, AI Index: AMR 46/18/92. A human rights activist called Pancho Soberón from Peru, who is currently visiting Europe, was available for interviews. International agencies picked up the story and there was a lot of international interest.

2. EUR 39/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
4 June 1992

ROMANIA: AI VISIT TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERSHIP

An Amnesty International (AI) delegation will be visiting Romania from 8 to 17 June to attend the First International Book Fair in Bucharest, where AI will have a stand, and explore the possibility of extending AI membership there. The delegation comprises two staff members of the organization's International Secretariat.

They will discuss the development of AI membership with a number of people, including the various groups-in-formation around the country, and meet others who have expressed interest in AI's goals and activities. The delegates will not do work on human rights issues in Romania: this is the task of AI's Research Department at the International Secretariat in London, which monitors and reports on human rights violations throughout the world.

5. EUR 57/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
4 June 1992

TOGO: INSUBSTANTIAL PRESIDENTIAL RESPONSE REINFORCES AI'S CALL FOR IMPARTIAL INQUIRIES INTO PAST HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

In response to an Amnesty International report: Togo: Impunity for human rights violators at a time of reform, published on 8 April, the Togolese authorities have contacted Amnesty International to deny that the human rights violations described in the report occurred. The report urged the Togolese authorities to thoroughly investigate past human rights violations and, in line with international standards, to bring those responsible to justice. It also made a series of recommendations to improve human rights safeguards for the future.

Representatives of President General Gnassingbé Eyadéma of Togo have subsequently visited the International Secretariat of Amnesty International twice and submitted a 39-page response to Amnesty International's report.

The response disputes the accuracy of information received by Amnesty International, including the findings of the official Human Rights Commission inquiry into killings in April 1991. It also rejects reports that officials were responsible for deaths of prisoners, yet does not indicate that their deaths have been subject to independent and impartial investigations -- For example, it acknowledges that 16 people died at one detention camp, the Kaza Centre for Social Integration, yet it asserts that these were not caused by human rights violations - backing up its assertion with testimonies from the Centre's authorities denying that torture took place. It does not clarify the circumstances in which prisoners died nor do the testimonies replace the need for an independent inquiry into the circumstances of each death.

Officials connected to the Presidency in Togo have also suggested that a researcher linked to Amnesty International has called into doubt the army's responsibility for human rights violations last year. This is in reference to a 23-page booklet, entitled Togo: La démocratie, de la Lagune de Bè à Agombio. Faits, rumeurs et manipulations (Togo: Democracy from the Bè Lagoon to Agombio. Facts, rumours and manipulation), published in May 1992, which assesses various rumours and other information about alleged human rights violations which have circulated in Togo since last year. Its author, Emmanuel Prost, is a member of Amnesty International's French Section. However, neither his research, which included visiting Togo, nor his publication were undertaken on behalf of Amnesty International and his booklet represents his personal findings, not those of Amnesty International.

The continuing controversy about past human rights violations in Togo and the conflicting claims about what occurred and who was responsible, reinforce the need for a thorough and independent investigation into all past human rights violations. Amnesty International fears that perpetrators of human rights violations will continue to act with impunity if those responsible for past violations are not brought to justice.

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ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 22/92

INTERNAL

The following weekly update explains in detail the recent controversy in South Africa surrounding the release of the interim report of the Goldstone Commission, which has been investigating political violence in the country. The key message in this update is that while the government says the commission has exonerated it of involvement in political killings, the commission states clearly that it has not done so. Therefore, our message that security forces are involved in political killings isn't being diluted by the controversy. This update can be sent to journalists if they are interested in receiving it.

1. AFR 53/03/92 EXTERNAL
5 June 1992

SOUTH AFRICA: GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT DISTORTS GOLDSTONE COMMISSION FINDINGS ON CAUSES OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE

A preliminary report by the judicial commission of inquiry investigating political violence in South Africa, known as the Goldstone Commission, was made public on 27 May. That report held the government responsible for failing to take appropriate action to prevent or punish unlawful activities by the South African security forces. In a statement accompanying the release of the Commission's report, the government claimed the report exonerated the security forces and placed the blame for the country's political violence solely on the African National Congress (ANC) and the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP).

Senior Appeal Court judge Richard Goldstone, the chairman of the commission, which was established after multi-party consultations under the terms of the September 1991 National Peace Accord, refuted the government's interpretation in a public statement on 1 June. He stressed that "in no way did the Commission in its Report ... exonerate elements in the Security Forces from contributing to violence in South Africa or the Government in failing to take sufficiently firm steps to prevent criminal conduct by members of the Security Forces".

Judge Goldstone also expressed "concern at the manner in which its views were unfairly and selectively used by public representatives who for some weeks had been in possession of all the information". The resulting "unfortunate confusion...could not have happened if all the interested parties and particularly all the signatories to the National Peace Accord had been placed in possession of the Commission's Report before the Government and Police spokesmen made public comment on it".

The government's action on 27 May occurred some hours after the Goldstone Commission

had itself released a four-page press statement calling on the leadership and supporters of the ANC and IFP to abandon violence as a political weapon and commit themselves to using effectively the structures of the National Peace Accord. In its statement, the commission viewed the violent conflict between ANC and IFP supporters in certain areas of the Transvaal and Natal provinces as creating the circumstances for security force misconduct.

In its 11-page "interim" report to the State President on 29 April, the commission referred to a "significant escalation of violence in recent weeks". The commission said it felt compelled by this and other factors to report its conclusions at what was otherwise a premature juncture in its work. On the question of the causes of the violence, the commission first noted that, despite the currency of the term "third force" as an explanation, it had to date received no information which could enable it to conclude that the violence was a "systematic or nationally organized campaign...[by] a sinister and secret organization." Rather, the commission saw the causes of the violence as "many and complicated", including the consequences of three centuries of racial discrimination, and the impact of the government's sudden and unexpected moves to legalize and negotiate with political organizations that were perceived as "the enemy of Inkatha, of white South Africans and, most important, of the police and the army". "Contributing to the violence was the role of

a police force and army which, for many decades, have been the instruments of oppression by successive White governments... for the majority of South Africans [the police and army] have not been community based or oriented...[and] are not perceived as fair, objective or friendly institutions."

In its report the commission expressed the need to avoid apportioning blame between the major parties involved in the violence. However the commission had "no doubt at all" that both ANC and IFP members and supporters have been guilty of actions resulting in deaths and injuries to large numbers of people, and that the leadership of these parties had been "slow in taking adequate and effective steps to stop the violence by imposing discipline and accountability among its membership".

In relation to the state's responsibilities, the commission notes that "a history over some years of State complicity in undercover activities, which include criminal conduct,...have enabled critics of the Government and others, fairly or unfairly, to place the blame for much of the current violence at the door of the security forces". In addition, the "well-documented criminal conduct by individual members of the South African Police and the KwaZulu Police exacerbate the perception of so many South Africans that the Government or its agencies are active parties responsible for the violence". Elsewhere in the report, the commission expressed concern about the widespread perception of the KwaZulu Police as a "private army of the Inkatha Freedom Party" and the "disturbing... evidence...concerning unlawful activities by senior members of the KwaZulu Police". Regarding the government's role, the commission commented that

"...our recent history has been one in which the government has failed to take sufficiently firm steps to prevent criminal conduct by members of the security forces and the police and to ensure that the guilty are promptly and adequately punished." In conclusion the commission recommended a series of urgent steps to be taken to ensure more effective policing of the violence, better police-community relations, the protection of witnesses giving evidence to the commission, and the end to the practice, particularly amongst IFP supporters, of carrying dangerous weapons in public.