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Amnesty International
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TO: PRESS OFFICERS

FROM: PRESS AND PUBLICATIONS

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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 25/92

Contained in this weekly update is an external item on Viet Nam.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

USA - 26 June

This note is to bring you up to date on when the media materials to go with the Los Angeles report are going to be available and to pass on our serious concern about the embargo.

Firstly, it is imperative that the embargo on this speech and report is not broken in any way. There are several reasons for this, firstly because much of the important information will be contained in Ian Martin's speech. Unlike most reports, where the embargo time is chosen arbitrarily, this embargo coincides with the start of a speech. It would obviously look particularly bad if the embargo were broken on a speech that had not even been delivered. The Los Angeles report is also likely to be one of the most important reports of the year for the whole movement, and one which will have an enormous impact on our international image. A serious embargo break, of the kind which marred last year's Annual Report or the Philippines report earlier this year, would do a great deal of damage.

We can't overstate the importance of maintaining the embargo on this one. Only yesterday, we had to bring forward the embargo of another international report (Greece) because the embargo was broken by the International Herald and Tribune. That created a snowball effect, and eventually we were unable to contain the embargo any longer. If something like that were to happen with the LA report the effects would be disastrous. It is important to remember that Los Angeles is in a later time zone than many other sections. If the embargo is broken at any time during the day on Friday in Europe, for example, it would give the Los Angeles media the chance to run the story in their morning news before the speech is delivered.

Because of this concern, the media in Los Angeles will not receive any of the media material until just before the embargo. The IS press office have also decided that we will not give any of the media materials, including the report, to agencies and broadcast media until one hour before the embargo, at 1630 hrs gmt on Friday 26 June. In order to maximise coverage, however, we are today sending out a media advisory to all our agency and broadcast contacts, letting them know in advance that a press briefing is being held in Los Angeles and that they can pick up the report and media package from the IS one hour before the embargo. As we are trying to encourage the media to cover the story from Los Angeles, we would ask you to also make the details of the press briefing available to them and let Jean Freedberg at AIUSA in Los Angeles know of any of your media you are certain will be attending: tel (+1) 310 815 0450, or from 25-28 June (+1) 213 624 1011 ext 1700 at the Biltmore

Hotel.

- The press briefing will be held at the Biltmore Bowl of the Biltmore Hotel in downtown Los Angeles, 5th and Olive Streets. Ian Martin's speech will begin at approximately 10.30am local time; camera crews and photographers are asked to arrive no later than 10.00am.

We would ask that you follow the same course as the IS and ensure that none of your broadcast or agency contacts get any of the media material, including the report, more than one hour ahead of the embargo time. Please bear in mind, that if your national news agency runs the story any more in advance than that, the embargo could be broken all too easily and ruin the international press coverage in Los Angeles. Also bear in mind that some of your national agencies are international and others are monitored closely by international agencies. We really cannot risk having the story slip onto the wires before 1630 on Friday.

Because of the lateness of much of the information, you yourselves will actually not receive much of the information very far in advance. The report and a summary of concerns have been sent to you already and many of you will have received those by now. The news release, highlights of the document and the text of Ian's speech are not expected to be ready until late Thursday afternoon gmt and will be sent to you overnight.

We know this will cause many of you some difficulties but unfortunately it cannot be avoided or altered at this stage. If you have any particular queries, do get in touch with us, although it is not going to be possible to send any information earlier.

We hope you will understand our very serious concerns about the embargo. Our usual concerns are twice as important in this case, because the report is likely to have great news value in many countries. Please make sure none of your contacts can scoop the story, by keeping the news release out of agency hands until the very last minute!

Annual Report - 9 July

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, updates and news release have now been sent to you. Thanks to those of you have sent in additional questions - we are working now on answers and they will be with you in plenty of time.

Syria - 22 July

Our first major report on Syria in some time will be released on 22 July. We consider this to be an extremely important document, because it makes clear that despite recent amnesties in Syria hundreds of political prisoners are still held in the country. We've discussed the publicity strategy with the research team, who say that high level international publicity is a key goal of releasing the report, and we would ask press officers to do as much work on this as possible.

Indigenous People's Campaign - 7 October

Discussions are currently under way at the IS about the media strategy for the report. 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.

GOOD NEWS ENR

The footage was sent out on 1992 Annual Report ENR. This is to confirm restrictions on the use of items 12 and 13 in the "Good News" footage which was sent along (on the same tape) with the 1992 Annual Report ENR. (see note accompanying the ENR dated 3 June signed by Anne Jenkins)

Please note that the two items-clips on Benazir Bhutto and Kim Dae-Jung - have not been cleared for general use and must not be used or offered for external use during 1992. They are part of a new AI video "AI in Asia", which will be released publicly in Asia this month. Please ensure that they are not offered for other use to broadcasters for the rest of this year.

You may of course use these two clips internally to show to the membership, providing they are not broadcast.

SECTION INITIATIVES

Moscow: Information Officer

The new information officer in Moscow has a number of newspapers interested in running regular AI columns. One, a children's newspaper, wants material that is aimed at children. If sections have any publications aimed at children or sections in their newsletters aimed at kids, could they send the material to the IS Press Office for us to forward to Mexico.

British Section: Wanted - Women Poets from round the world!

The British Section is working with a major feminist publisher in the UK on a women's poetry book, scheduled for publication in Autumn 1993.

Please let us know if there are any women poets in your country whose work relates - roughly - to Amnesty's concerns, which has been translated into English, or perhaps have written poems which you feel are so strong that they should be translated into English.

When the book is published, the publishers will be looking for international rights sales. Please let any sympathetic publishers in your country whom you think might be interested in buying the rights for this book know about the book.

Please contact Norma Johnston, Head of Communications in the British Section, for suggestions of poets.

FORTHCOMING WEEKLY UPDATE ITEMS

A report on Venezuela will be sent to you in the mailing of 1 July. A weekly update item to accompany it will be sent to you next week: while it will have no specific embargo date, it will be sent to Latin American media to arrive in the week of 15 July. You may choose to seek publicity for the report, in which case please time it around 15 July.

2. ASA 41/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
24 June 1992

INTERNAL

For further details about arrests in Viet Nam please refer to **Viet Nam: Arrests of Political Prisoners, 1990-1991 ASA 41/01/92, June 1992.**

EXTERNAL

VIET NAM: RELEASES REPORTED, SOME DETAINEES STILL HELD

Amnesty International welcomes reports from the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry that Viet Nam had released by 30 April 1992 all military and civil officials of the former Government of South Viet Nam who had been held in "re-education" camps. However, the organization is concerned that a number of political prisoners who were associated with the former Government of South Viet Nam may continue to be held without charge or trial, including Nguyen Khac Chinh, a lawyer and writer, detained for more than 16 years. Amnesty International is also concerned at the re-arrest recently of a number of suspected opponents of the government, some of whom were associated with the former South Vietnamese government and had previously been detained for long periods in "re-education" camps.

Nguyen Khac Chinh, a prisoner of conscience, has been held without charge or trial since 27 December 1975. Amnesty International believes this is because he was one of a group of Catholic intellectuals opposed to the communist authorities. The organization is calling for his immediate and unconditional release. Other prisoners of conscience whose release Amnesty International is seeking include Doan Thanh Liem, a former legal counsellor for the Senate of the former South Vietnamese government, who was sentenced on 14 May 1992 to 12 years' imprisonment for spreading "anti-socialist propaganda", and Doan Viet Hoat, who was re-arrested in November 1990 after having been detained without trial in a "re-education" camp for no less than 12 years, between 1976 to 1988.

Amnesty International has also recently received reports of several trials in Viet Nam of real and suspected government critics who were charged with crimes against national security. Nguyen Tri, a poet, was sentenced on 14 May to 8 years' imprisonment for spreading "anti-socialist propaganda". Nguyen Ngoc Dat, who was detained in a "re-education" camp from 1976 to 1987, was sentenced on 28 May to 20 years' imprisonment for "subversive activities". Six people were sentenced in Ha Son Binh province (formerly Ha Tay province) to prison terms ranging from 3 to 14 years for forming opposition parties. Amnesty International is concerned that some of those imprisoned may be prisoners of conscience and that the trials may have fallen short of international standards for fair trial.

Other government critics who are also apparently still to be brought to trial on charges of breaching national security include a number of associates of Doan Viet Hoat and a group of former South Vietnamese military officers, including Trinh Van Thuong, who were arrested in June 1991 for allegedly inciting violent uprisings against the government. Amnesty International is again concerned that the trials may fall short of international standards for fair trials.

Seventeen persons were reportedly arrested on 25 April 1992 in Ho Chi Minh City. They were alleged to have called for an "uprising" to overthrow the government authorities. Among them was Nguyen Si Binh, a Vietnamese businessman who is a citizen of the United States of America. Pham Van Thuc was also arrested after sending six articles to the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reportedly "calling on the West to intervene to overthrow the socialist regime in Viet Nam". Amnesty International is appealing to the Vietnamese authorities to ensure that detention conditions and procedures conform to international standards and that all those arrested are either charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a fair trial within a reasonable time or released.

Amnesty International is appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of all those confined solely for the non-violent expression of fundamental human rights. The organization is urging the government to uphold the right to freedom of expression, the right to freedom of association and the right to freedom of opinion.

The organization is also calling on the Vietnamese government to ensure that international standards for fair trial are respected in political trials. It is asking the government to ensure that articles of the Vietnamese **Criminal Code**, under the heading "especially dangerous crimes against national security", are never invoked to imprison people solely for the peaceful expression of their fundamental human rights or to detain political prisoners for prolonged and unspecified periods without charge or trial.

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ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 25/92

Enclosed in this addition to the weekly update is an external item on Greece.

1. EUR 25/WU 03/92 EXTERNAL

GREECE: GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO AI REPORTS OF TORTURE

Following the publication of Amnesty International's report on torture and ill-treatment in Greece, the Greek government has issued several statements. Initially it denied all the allegations. On Wednesday 24 June, however, the Ministry of Public Order issued a statement stating that an investigation into each of the allegations has started, saying that it would be prepared to acknowledge any cases where police have overstepped the mark.

Amnesty International welcomes the government's apparent willingness to look at allegations of torture and ill-treatment, urges the government to ensure that all investigations are full, prompt and impartial, that the results are made public and that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

"The Greek government is obliged under international agreements to hold such investigations," said the human rights organization. "We hope that the authorities are now taking serious steps to address the problem of torture in Greek police stations and prisons."

The government claims that Amnesty International has not taken into account action already taken by the authorities. "We would like to believe that the government has taken action," said the human rights organization, "but despite our repeated requests the government has refused to give us information in many cases. We have sought further information and clarification from the government in over 30 cases. The government did not reply to inquiries in 22 of those cases: in a further seven the government denied the allegations but declined to give any more information. We are still waiting to hear details of any concrete steps taken by the government.

"It is obviously of paramount importance that the results of all investigations are made public. We hope the government's recent statements indicate a new openness on the part of the authorities."

Amnesty International's 55-page report is based on several years of research, and draws from medical and legal documents as well as accounts by victims themselves and their families. In one case, for example, which resulted in the death of a torture victim, Amnesty International arranged an independent forensic report and looked at the official post-mortem results. The organization also has photographs and other information which point to a conclusion that death was caused by torture at the hands of the Athens anti-narcotics police.

Amnesty International is glad to hear the Greek government's statement that it has nothing to hide. The organization reiterates its calls for a commission of inquiry to be set up to investigate the factors which facilitate torture and ill-treatment and for full measures to be taken to eradicate this abuse.