
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

NEWS SERVICE 139/94

TO: PRESS OFFICERS
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE
DATE: 29 JUNE 1994 NO OF WORDS:1142

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

PLEASE NOTE: MEDIA WORK ON RWANDA AND BURUNDI PROGRAMME OF CAMPAIGNING

A three-month programme of campaigning on Rwanda and Burundi is taking place from mid-June to mid-September to focus attention on the human rights situation in those countries.

As part of the programme, the Media/Audiovisual Program will be using the launch of the annual report on 7 July to draw special attention to our concerns and recommendations on Burundi and Rwanda and we are encouraging section press officers to do the same.

We want to link the annual report and Burundi/Rwanda partly to use the high level of coverage the report gets to focus media attention on those countries and partly because the report is launched on the three-month anniversary of the latest round of violence in Rwanda which provides a news hook.

At this stage we are not planning a public statement on Burundi/Rwanda to coincide with the launch, although we may issue one depending on changing events. Instead, we will be providing through the news service a precis of key points to be raised in press conferences and interviews by IS and section spokespeople.

We expect to be able to send this to sections by the end of this week or Monday of next week.

PLEASE NOTE: ANNUAL REPORT EMBARGO BREAK

Last week the annual report entry for Denmark was leaked to a Danish newspaper and reprinted in full. Fortunately this leak did not trigger embargo breaks in other countries, but it again points to the need for sections to make sure that they don't give journalists an opportunity to break the embargo.

We would ask all section press officers to follow the guidelines issued in previous years:

- don't send the annual report information to journalists more than 24 hours in advance of the embargo, unless you are dealing with trusted contacts
- don't hold a press conference or other event in advance of the embargo time if you know that the local media practice is to break embargos in those circumstances

Our experience in previous years has shown that an embargo break in one country near the launch date can trigger embargo breaks in other countries and ultimately internationally. Please be aware that international news agencies DO monitor national news agencies and that embargo breaks can therefore start in any country.

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 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Algeria - first week of October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

France - second week of October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

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 - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

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

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29 JUNE 1994

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA: CALL FOR PROTECTION OF REFUGEES FOLLOWING TRAGIC DEATH OF DEPORTED MUSLIM GIRL

A young Bosnian Muslim woman arrested in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia was so terrified of being deported to Serbia she jumped from a moving train and fell to her death, according to information recently received by Amnesty International.

"This tragic story highlights several crucial questions which need to be asked about the protection of refugees and asylum-seekers in Macedonia", Amnesty International said.

In a letter sent today to the Foreign Minister of Macedonia, Amnesty International said it was concerned that 17-year-old Ilda Pašić and her 19-year-old sister, Dženeta, were expelled on 28 May without any formal hearing in which to put forward arguments against their expulsion.

The two women were arrested near the town of Kumanovo and taken to a police station because they did not have valid personal documents.

On the following day, after lengthy questioning by the police, they were put onto a train bound for Belgrade, in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY). As they travelled into Serbia the women, apparently fearful of what might happen to them there, jumped from the moving train. Ilda was killed in the fall and her sister was injured.

There was apparently no judicial or administrative procedure which considered the grounds for their deportation, or which examined any reasons why the two women might have wanted to stay in Macedonia or not be sent to the FRY.

Ilda and Dženeta Pašić fled from a Serb-controlled area of Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1992 where Amnesty International has received consistent reports of abuses against Muslims.

Even though they were not expelled to Bosnia-Herzegovina, where they feared human rights violations, Amnesty International is concerned that they were deported to a third country. Under the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees -- which Macedonia acceded to early this year -- states must not expel or return refugees in any manner whatsoever to a country where they would be at risk. It follows from this that states should not send asylum-seekers against their will to any third country without taking steps to ensure that they will be given effective and lasting protection against such return in that country.

As well, states have an obligation not to expel any asylum-seeker without a full and thorough hearing to examine whether they are indeed in need of protection and so should not be expelled.

In its letter, the human rights organization called on the Foreign Minister of Macedonia to:

- carry out a thorough and impartial inquiry into the circumstances of the deportation of Ilda and Dženeta

Pašić, and to inform Amnesty International of the results of the inquiry.

- to take action to ensure that, in future, asylum-seekers -- including people who may not have explicitly asked for asylum but who have expressed a fear of returning to the countries they come from -- are not deported to countries where they would be at risk of human rights violations.

- to make sure also that such people are not sent to any third countries without ensuring that the authorities in such countries will provide them with effective and durable protection against return to a country where they would be at risk.

- to make sure that no asylum seekers are expelled without a full, thorough and individual examination of their case, including their reasons for seeking protection, the risks they would face if returned, and -- if relevant -- the level of protection they would be afforded in any third country.

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