
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 170/93

TO: PRESS OFFICERS AI INDEX: NWS 11/170/93
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE DISTR: SC/PO
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NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - ROMANIA, UNITED NATIONS

PLEASE NOTE: The occupation of the Swiss Section last week was very short and the occupiers left that day. Apologies for not informing you earlier.

PLEASE NOTE: Please refer back to News Services 167 and 168 for further info to go with UN item enclosed.

NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Children - 7 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

This item should be sent to you today to go with the January Focus article.

Tunisia - 12 January

This item was sent out to you last week.

****UN Peacekeeping operations - 4 February****

A document and news release is being prepared criticizing UN peacekeeping operations, including Somalia, Mozambique, etc. The document will be sent in the weekly mailing of 26 January - if it does not arrive in time, please call the IS.

****UK - 9 February****

News release to go with document, UK: Political killings in Northern Ireland, AI Index: EUR 45/01/94

South Africa - 16 February SEE NEWS SERVICE 159

Kuwait - 24 February

News release to go with February Focus article. The anniversary of the Iraqi withdrawal is 26 February (Saturday), which will be the news angle of the release - hence the embargo date. Please do not send the Focus out to journalists before the embargo if possible and let us know if any embargo breaks happen, so that we can reassess if necessary.

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

USA death penalty - 14 January - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

This item should be sent out to you this week.

****Zaire - 2 February****

News item to go with document and Section Level Action.

FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Women - 8 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 161

Saudi Arabia - 10 March more details to follow

Colombia - 16 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 123 + UAs AMR 23/56+57/93

INTERNALNews Service 170/93

GRANTS OPPORTUNITY FOR JOURNALISTS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Canada is offering four grants of \$8000 each to print or electronic journalists from developing countries who wish to learn about the role of the press as a watch-dog in a democratic society. The candidates must be professional journalists in the political, social or economic field and preference will be given to journalists in: Eritrea, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Mexico, Peru, Burma, Pakistan and Thailand.

If you or anyone you know is interested in this, contact: Grants Programme for journalists from developing countries, International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, 63, rue de Brésoles, Montréal, (QC) H2Y 1V7. Tel: (514) 283-6073, Fax: (514) 283-3792. The application deadline is 1 June 1994.

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AI INDEX: EUR 39/WU 02/93
21 DECEMBER 1993

ROMANIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR RELEASE OF THREE PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE
IMPRISONED SOLELY FOR PRACTISING HOMOSEXUAL ACTS IN PRIVATE

Amnesty International today wrote to President Ion Iliescu of Romania expressing concern that three men have been sentenced to up to two and a half years' imprisonment solely for practising homosexual acts in private.

The three men, Marius Aitai, Cosmin Hutanu and Ovidiu Chetea, were among 57 people detained in Romanian prisons on 18 November who had been convicted under Article 200 of the Romanian Penal Code. The three were imprisoned under the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article which states that "sexual intercourse between persons of the same sex is punishable by one to five years' imprisonment".

Marius Aitai, a 22-year-old prisoner in Gherla prison, was sentenced in 1992 by the court in Dej to two years and six months' imprisonment for having sexual relations with another prisoner. Cosmin Hutanu, a 21-year-old man, was sentenced during 1993 by the court in Focşanu to one year and two months' imprisonment and is currently serving his sentence in Focşanu prison. Ovidiu Chetea, a 20-year-old man, was sentenced in 1993 by the court of Timișoara to one year and six months' imprisonment. He is currently serving his sentence in the Oradea prison.

Amnesty International had previously explained to the Romanian authorities that its work for the release of prisoners of conscience includes individuals who have been imprisoned solely because of their homosexuality - including the practice of homosexual acts in private between freely consenting adults. The organization had urged the Romanian authorities to take appropriate steps for the legislative reform of Article 200 and had stressed that it considered the provisions of paragraphs 1 and 4 of the article to contravene the European Convention for the Protection of Fundamental Freedoms and Human Rights, which Romania signed on 4 November 1993.

Amnesty International considers Marius Aitai, Cosmin Hutanu and Ovidiu Chetea to be prisoners of conscience and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

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UNITED NATIONS: HIGH COMMISSIONER APPROVED BY GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Amnesty International has welcomed the decision by the United Nations General Assembly to establish a High Commissioner for Human Rights. The resolution establishing the post was adopted by consensus at the General Assembly's plenary session on Monday 20 December in New York.

The adoption comes six months after the UN World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna first recommended that the post of High Commissioner should be considered by the General Assembly. While it remains to be seen exactly how the post will develop, Amnesty International expects that the new Office of the High Commissioner will raise the profile of human rights in the UN system and strengthen global protection of human rights.

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