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# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 199/94

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TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 26 AUGUST 1994 NO OF WORDS:1899

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **YEMEN** (See news schedule below), **TOGO** (See news schedule below), **USA** (This item is being sent to international media by the IS press office), **DENMARK** (This item is for response only)

**EFAI PLEASE NOTE:** The enclosed item on Togo is for priority translation as we will need a French version to send to the media before the embargo date. Please could you e-mail your translation of the text as soon as it is completed. Many thanks - Dina

## **INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES**

Brazil - 14 September - PLEASE NOTE THIS IS AN INTERNATIONAL RELEASE. SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Kosovo - 19 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

Indonesia - 28 September - LAUNCH OF CAMPAIGN

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

France - 12 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 137/94

## **TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES**

Bhutan/Nepal - 25 August - See news service 168/94

Yemen - 1 September - See news service 194/94

Thailand - 6 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 184/94

Togo - 15 September - See news service 168/94

Turkey - 14 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 181/94

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AI INDEX: AMR 51/ WU 12/94  
26 AUGUST 1994

USA: NEW CRIME BILL CRITICIZED FOR EXPANSION OF FEDERAL DEATH PENALTY

Amnesty International has condemned the expansion of the federal death penalty in President Clinton's new crime bill, passed by the US Senate yesterday, as a major set back for human rights in the USA.

No one has been executed under federal law since 1963, however, the federal death penalty will now be applied to about 60 crimes, including non-homicidal offenses such as the attempted assassination of the President, and major drug-related crimes. The death penalty was previously authorized under federal law only for murder during aircraft hijacking and drug-related homicides.

"This extension just adds to the grave concerns we already have about the use of the death penalty in the USA, which is applied disproportionately on the poor, minority groups, the mentally ill or retarded, and those without adequate legal representation", Amnesty International said.

The organization sees this new move as further proof of the United States' increasing isolation from the worldwide trend towards the abolition of such a barbaric practice, which -- according to the evidence of detailed research in the USA and other countries -- does not deter crime more effectively than other punishments.

The organization deeply regrets that a provision, included in an earlier version of the bill, which would have allowed defendants to challenge their death sentences on grounds of racial discrimination, was dropped from the final version.

US Attorney General Janet Reno reportedly said that the new bill "...will mean fewer victims, fewer tragedies, fewer lost lives." Amnesty International stated today: "The provisions regarding the death penalty in the new bill will in fact mean more victims of state-sanctioned killing and more violations of the right to life".

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AI INDEX: AFR 57/WU 03/94  
EMBARGOED FOR 15 SEPTEMBER 1994

TOGO: NEW GOVERNMENT FAILS TO PUT HUMAN RIGHTS ON ITS AGENDA

One year after presidential elections in Togo and six months on from the country's first ever multi-party elections, past human rights violations remain uninvestigated and unaccounted for and violations continue to be carried out by the Togolese security forces, according to Amnesty International.

"Since the new government came to power, insecurity in the capital, Lomé, has continued despite the announcement of measures aimed at establishing the rule of law," Amnesty International said.

Recent information suggests that political activists and some returning refugees have been harassed and intimidated by members of the Togolese Armed Forces or by armed groups and individuals, some of whom may be working in collusion with the Togolese Armed Forces. A number of businessmen -- particularly financiers -- have been the target of recent assassination attempts, some of which have been successful.

The security forces have also allegedly arbitrarily detained people on account of their political opinions. One man who was arbitrarily arrested by soldiers in July was allegedly held in a secret detention centre with 12 other detainees; he was held for 19 days and subjected to torture and ill-treatment.

The government is not known to have made any attempt to establish responsibility for any of these incidents.

"Unless the Togolese government puts the protection of human rights firmly on the political agenda, and punishes those found guilty of past and present abuses, the future safeguard of human rights in the country cannot be assured," Amnesty International said.

In a report published today, the human rights organization is calling on the new government of Togo to confirm its commitment to investigate past violations and bring cases to court.

"Although the new government itself is not responsible for human rights abuses committed in the past, it now needs to acknowledge and investigate these violations -- notably those committed by the security forces -- as a clear indication that such abuses will not be tolerated in the future," Amnesty International said today.

Scores of people were extrajudicially executed, arbitrarily arrested, tortured and harassed by the security forces during the period of political transition in Togo. This began with the National Conference in 1991 and ended with presidential and multi-party legislative elections in August 1993 and February this year.

Amnesty International's new report documents violations during the election period. These include the death in custody of at least 20 opposition supporters in August last year; the extrajudicial execution of at least 48 people by members of the Togolese Armed Forces following an alleged attack in Lomé this January; the killing of a member of parliament, Gaston Aziaduvo Edeh, and two other political activists and the "disappearance" of at least four people in February this year.

The new report also calls on the government to implement urgently needed human rights reforms, including vigorous measures to eradicate torture and a review of the cases of political prisoners still held. These include prisoner of conscience Martin Dossou Gbenouga, a newspaper editor, sentenced to five years' imprisonment in May in connection with an article which criticized President Eyadéma and the French Government. His conviction fits into a long-standing pattern of intimidation and harassment of independent journalists, newspaper publishers and vendors in Togo.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the continued detention without charge or trial of trade union leader Komi Dackey, arrested on 11 January this year. The government claims that Komi Dackey is among a number of individuals held on suspicion of their involvement in a violent attack on the headquarters of the *Régiment interarmes togolais* (RIT), Togolese Combined Regiment in Lomé on 5 January, but other sources maintain that he was arrested because of his trade union activities.

Amnesty International believes that the Togolese authorities should urgently review these and other cases, with a view to completing the judicial process fairly and speedily and releasing prisoners who are detained on account of their non-violent political views.

The organization is also urging other governments which have links with Togo to assist the Togolese authorities in improving human rights. Any government that has renewed its military assistance to Togo, in particular the French government -- who were the first to do so -- should ensure that any such assistance incorporates training in respect for human rights and is not used to facilitate human rights violations.

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AI INDEX: MDE 31/WU 06/94  
EMBARGOED FOR 1 SEPTEMBER 1994

YEMEN: HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS FOLLOWING RECENT CONFLICT

Amnesty International is urgently calling on the Government of Yemen to take immediate steps towards a visible, concrete improvement in the country's human rights situation.

Following a visit to Yemen in July, the human rights organization is today releasing a report documenting human rights violations committed by both sides during and since the recent conflict. While in the country, Amnesty International's delegation met with government officials, interviewed prisoners, and met lawyers and other human rights activists.

"Further human rights violations of the kind witnessed in recent months should be prevented," Amnesty International said.

"However, this can only be done if the government acknowledges that these violations were an escalation of what is an ongoing pattern in Yemen and takes effective action to ensure the respect of human rights in the country".

Amnesty International's longstanding concerns in Yemen include widescale arrests of suspected political opponents -- including prisoners of conscience -- torture, "disappearances" and political killings; all of which continued both during and after the conflict.

The organization has repeatedly raised its concerns with the Yemen authorities, however, the government's attitude of complacency has continued. The delegation once again raised its concerns with the authorities during its July visit and received assurances that they would be seriously addressed, but there have been few visible signs of improvement.

The organization welcomed the presidential amnesty announced on 23 May which resulted in the release of thousands of prisoners, but hundreds of political detainees remain, including prisoners of conscience. They are denied any access to legal counsel, their families and independent medical attention. None of them has been brought before a judge, nor has there been a judicial review of their detention.

These arrests and detentions continued after the defeat of the southern forces in early July. Detainees are currently being held incommunicado in political security detention centres and other places throughout the Republic of Yemen without charge or trial.

The armed militia of Islah, the Yemeni Grouping for Reform, have also detained many suspected political opponents, particularly in the southern and eastern provinces. Islah members are present at government checkpoints and police stations, and have carried out functions which should be exclusively those of law enforcement officers. Many detainees are being held in secret detention places where it is feared they are at serious risk of being tortured or killed.

"The government appears to have taken no measures to curb the activities of this militia. Its members are apparently operating openly with the tacit consent of senior government and military officials,"

Amnesty International said.

Many detainees have been tortured and ill-treated. The use of leg irons, beatings with cables, electric shocks and actual or threatened rape are all widespread. Amnesty International is again calling on the government to ensure that all detainees are protected against torture and ill-treatment.

The organization is also gravely concerned about the scores of people, both civilians and military personnel, who may have been killed by government forces outside the context of armed conflict, sometimes with the involvement of the Islah militia. Amnesty International is not aware of any investigations set up by the government into any such incidents.

"The government must recognize the importance of respecting and safeguarding human rights in Yemen. A sign of this recognition would be the immediate release all prisoners of conscience, and for them to make known hte whereabouts of all those who are being held incommunicado in all unacknowledged places of detention", Amnesty International said.

These are just two of the 13 recommendations Amnesty International has proposed to the Yemeni Government.

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AI INDEX: EUR 18/WU 06/94  
26 AUGUST 1994

DENMARK: PUBLICATION OF REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTION

Amnesty International welcomes the publication of the Director of Public Prosecution's report summarizing the investigation into events during a violent demonstration on 18-19 May 1993 in Copenhagen.

During the course of the demonstration which occurred in north-central Copenhagen, police in plain-clothes and riot gear fired 113 shots. At least 11 people, most of whom were reportedly by-standers, were wounded.

Amnesty International will study the contents of this report, which will be sent to the organization by the Danish authorities.

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