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Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ
United Kingdom

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WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 19/92

Contained in this weekly update are external items on Bangladesh, Angola, Peru, Bulgaria and Mongolia and internal items on the Greece publication and from the British Section.

1. NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

China (Tibet) - 20 May 1992

A news release has been sent to you and the document will be with you shortly. The questions and answers has been sent to you today.

Burundi - 28 May - PLEASE NOTE CORRECTION! (New Information)

Please note - the news release has been sent to you with a spelling error - page 1, last word in para 4, the journalist's name should read Renovat Ndikumana.

Pakistan - 3 June

A document and targeted news release on arrests in Sind.

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. We are also considering a conference call - let us know if you are interested.

Nepal - 17 June

Limited news release to go with a document on Nepal.

Greece - 24 June

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

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 have now been sent to you. The updates will be with you in the first week of June.

UNCONFIRMED NEWS INITIATIVES

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.

2. ASA 13/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
13 May 1992

BANGLADESH: AI CONCERNED ABOUT REPORTED KILLINGS IN CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS

Amnesty International wrote to the Government of Bangladesh on 5 May to raise its concern over the reported killings on 10 April of several hundred, perhaps a thousand, tribal inhabitants of Logong village in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. The deaths apparently occurred in reprisal for an attack by the Shanti Bahini (Peace Force), an armed tribal opposition group, on a Bengali youth.

According to reports received by Amnesty International, Bengali settlers accompanied by members of the Village Defence Force, a civilian force with official status, and the paramilitary Ansars, surrounded Logong around noon on 10 April, herded the tribal villagers into their homes and set fire to them. Hundreds were reportedly burned alive, while villagers who attempted to flee were apparently shot dead. The paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles reportedly arrived on the spot shortly after the killing had begun but did nothing to stop it. Members of the Bangladesh Rifles are said to have surrounded the village and prevented people from getting away and others from going near the dead, dying and injured.

Amnesty International expressed concern particularly about the scale of the killing. The organization has not been able to verify independently the number of those killed, but reports consistently speak of hundreds dead. A group of visitors from Dhaka, including human rights activists, lawyers, journalists, Members of Parliament and the Deputy Attorney General of Bangladesh, were in the vicinity of Logong at the time of the incident to participate in a tribal festival. Though they were prevented from fully investigating the killings, they spoke to a number of eye-witnesses. A Joint Statement issued by some of them on 19 April stated that "more than 400 houses were burnt to ashes and more than 200 children, women and elders were killed". Brigadier Sharif Aziz in Khagrachari reportedly confirmed to the group that 138 people had died. Many human rights groups in Bangladesh believe the number of dead to be considerably higher.

Amnesty International conveyed to the Government of Bangladesh its concern that some of the reported deaths were apparently the result of deliberate killings of defenceless people by members of the security forces, including the Village Defence Force and the Ansars. Amnesty International pointed out to the Government of Bangladesh that extrajudicial executions are prohibited by several international human rights standards as well as by the constitution of Bangladesh, which states: "No person shall be deprived of life and personal liberty save in accordance with law."

Amnesty International called on the Government of Bangladesh promptly to initiate a full, independent and impartial inquiry which should establish the circumstances in which the killings in Logong took place and whether any of the killings were extrajudicial executions or the result of unlawful and unnecessary use of force by the security forces. The alleged failure of the Bangladesh Rifles to take any preventive action should also be investigated. Amnesty International urged the government to ensure that any member of the security forces alleged to be responsible for extrajudicial executions or other grave human rights violations should be brought to justice. Amnesty International also called on the government to ensure that all law enforcement personnel are clearly instructed that lethal force may not be used except in genuine life-threatening circumstances and only as a last resort.

3. AFR 12/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL
13 May 1992

INTERNAL

The IS will be sending this item to journalists interested in Angola in particular or African affairs generally and suggest that section press officers could do the same. Press officers could also bring it to the attention of journalists specializing in religious affairs in advance of the Pope's visit to Angola in early June 1992. Please also draw this item to the attention of section lobbyists.

EXTERNAL

ANGOLA: POLITICAL KILLINGS DESPITE PEACE AGREEMENTS

There has been a series of politically-motivated killings in Angola over the past year, despite peace agreements in May 1991, according to a report from Amnesty International.

President José Eduardo dos Santos and Jonas Savimbi, leader of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), National Union for the Total Independence of Angola, signed the Peace Accords for Angola in May 1991 and agreed to end a 16-year civil war. However, both parties to the peace agreement have failed to investigate the killings and bring those responsible to justice.

Following a visit to Angola by Amnesty International representatives in March 1992, the organization is now publishing a report, Angola: an appeal for prompt action to protect human rights, calling on the government, UNITA and others to prevent further killings.

The most widely-reported killings of prisoners in recent months were the executions by UNITA forces of former UNITA officials Pedro "Tito" Chingunji and Fernando Wilson dos Santos and at least three members of their families. They were executed in the latter half of 1991 and had been imprisoned in Jamba, UNITA's headquarters in southeastern Angola. UNITA mounted its own inquiry, but without guaranteeing an independent and impartial investigation, and has not yet published its findings.

There have been several other politically-motivated killings in recent months. Those attributed to the government include the killing of at least six people and the wounding of over 20 others in a reportedly peaceful demonstration in support of separatist groups fighting for the independence of Cabinda, an Angolan enclave between the Zaire and Congo Republics, in November 1991. Among the killings attributed to UNITA officials was the murder in March 1992 of four government air-force officers, two of whom were apparently buried alive.

None of those responsible for the 18 killings which Amnesty International has documented since May 1991 has been brought to justice. Since independence in 1975, both the government and UNITA have consistently failed to carry out official investigations into reports that their officials have deliberately killed prisoners or other political opponents. These include many hundreds of people who were killed or "disappeared" in custody after a failed coup attempt against the government in 1977 and scores of UNITA members suspected of opposing UNITA's policies or leadership during the 1980s.

The killings of political opponents since May 1991 are clear violations of the Peace Accords which provide for an end to all violence against civilians, the release of all prisoners arrested in the context of the conflict, respect for freedom of speech, association and movement, and the extension of government authority to areas under UNITA's control. However, neither side has been willing to risk any impartial investigation which might find it or its supporters to be responsible for human rights violations. Under the terms of the Peace Accords, decisions were to be made by consensus between the government and UNITA - this means that in practice each side can veto any action which might affect its short-term political interests. As a result, the human rights provisions of the Peace

Accords have all been flouted or seriously delayed.

In its report, Amnesty International calls on the parties to the Peace Accords to reaffirm their commitment to upholding fundamental rights and freedoms, to investigate and remedy human rights abuses and to take any other necessary steps to promote respect for and protection of human rights. Amnesty International is also calling on the international observers to the Peace Accords for Angola, the United Nations (UN) and the international community as a whole to use their influence in support of greater protection for human rights in Angola.

4. AMR 46/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL
13 May 1992

PERU: AI URGES GOVERNMENT TO GUARANTEE SAFETY AND LIVES OF PRISONERS

Amnesty International wrote to President Alberto Fujimori on 12 May urging him to guarantee the safety and lives of all those prisoners transferred out of Miguel Castro Castro Prison in Lima, Peru, following a combined police and military operation to regain control of the prison.

According to reports, the operation, which commenced on 6 May, resulted in the deaths of at least 28 alleged members of the clandestine armed opposition group Partido Comunista del Peru (Sendero Luminoso) and two members of the security forces.

After the authorities had regained control of the prison, inmates were transferred to hospital or to other centres of detention. A number of other prisoners - between three and 130 according to differing reported statements by officials - remained unaccounted for.

While Amnesty International recognizes the right of the authorities to control its prisons, the organization urged the government to do so by taking all the necessary steps to guarantee the safety and lives of all the prisoners transferred out of the Miguel Castro Castro Prison or who still remain within it.

Amnesty International also urged the government to make immediately available a complete list of the names of:

- all the inmates held in the Miguel Castro Castro Prison immediately prior to the operation launched on 6 May 1992;
- the inmates and members of the security forces killed and injured during the security forces' operation;
- the inmates transferred out of the prison to hospital or to other centres of detention, stating their present whereabouts;
- the inmates who remained unaccounted for once the authorities regained control of the establishment.

The organization urged that the authorities publicly state where the bodies of those persons killed are presently located and to immediately order full and independent autopsies to determine the time, manner and cause of death. It further requested that those people injured and hospitalized be granted access to independent lawyers and relatives.

5. EUR 15/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
13 May 1992

BULGARIA: AI VISIT TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERSHIP

An Amnesty International (AI) delegation will be visiting Bulgaria from 14 to 21 May to explore the possibility of extending AI membership there. The delegation comprises a staff member of the organization's International Secretariat in London and a member of AI's Dutch Section.

They will discuss the development of AI membership with a number of people, including the group-in-formation in Sofia, and meet others who have expressed interest in its goals and activities. The delegates will not do work on human rights issues in Bulgaria: 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.

6. ASA 30/WU 01/92 EXTERNAL
13 May 1992

MONGOLIA: AI VISIT TO ENCOURAGE MEMBERSHIP

An Amnesty International (AI) delegation will be visiting Mongolia from 29 May to 5 June to explore the possibility of extending AI membership there. The delegation comprises a staff member of the organization's International Secretariat in London and a member of AI's US Section of Amnesty International.

They will discuss the development of AI membership with a number of people and meet others who have expressed interest in its goals and activities. The delegates will not do work on human rights issues in Mongolia: 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.

7. EUR 25/WU 02/92 INTERNAL
13 May 1992

URGENT: PLEASE PASS ON TO YOUR PUBLICATIONS MANAGER

The GREECE document embargoed for 24 June will now be published as a new format report (A5). The report concentrates on cases of alleged torture or ill-treatment which have occurred over the last two years. A summary of the cases which Amnesty International has raised with the Greek authorities since 1986 is contained in the appendix.

The report costs £4 and the usual discounts will apply. Sections will receive their standing order for this publication. Sections wishing to amend their standing order must FAX their amendment to Talat Omer at the International Secretariat immediately.

8. ACT 80/WU 01/92 INTERNAL
13 May 1992

BRITISH SECTION: MEDIA-FRIENDLY EX-POCS

The British Section Press Office is compiling a directory of media-friendly ex-POCs and other witnesses who could be called upon to do speaker tours and media appearances for other sections throughout Europe.

If you are in contact with any ex-POCs or other witnesses who you think would be prepared to speak about their experiences, please could you let the British Section Press Office know.

Please could you include the following details:
Name, Country, Personal Details, Language(s) Spoken, Summary of experience, Availability to speak on radio/television, Ability to travel, Experience of media work - in own country and abroad.

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ADDITION TO WEEKLY UPDATE SERVICE 19/92

1. AFR 53/WU 02/92 EXTERNAL
14 May 1992

INTERNAL

The IS has sent out the following to press interested in Africa, though not to international agencies, as an 'Advice to Editors' - for immediate release. If you have any press queries about the forthcoming report on South Africa, please do not give out any further information about it other than that it will be coming out some time in June.

EXTERNAL

SOUTH AFRICA: NEW EVIDENCE OF POLICE AND MILITARY COMPLICITY IN HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS WITH POLITICAL NEGOTIATIONS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE

The South African government has responded to new evidence of police and military complicity in human rights violations by initiating further official investigations, but has not taken firm enough action to end the security forces' involvement in killings, torture and other abuses, according to Amnesty International.

Throughout 1992, Amnesty International has continued to receive compelling evidence of security force involvement in torture, political killings and other serious human rights violations. In a statement to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in January 1992, Amnesty International emphasised that members of the security forces implicated in human rights violations are rarely brought to justice, despite President F W de Klerk's commitment in July 1991 to investigate all allegations.

Amnesty International is concerned that until the government takes steps to demonstrate publicly that all members of the security forces involved in torture, extrajudicial executions or other human rights violations will be brought to justice, the current climate of fear and high loss of life will continue, threatening the prospects for a democratic transition in South Africa.

On 15 and 16 May 1992 representatives of 19 political parties, including the ruling Nationalist Party, the African National Congress (ANC), the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) and the Democratic Party (DP), meet again in a second plenary session of the negotiations forum - the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA). The negotiations, which have been continuing in working parties since the first plenary session in December 1991, are now at a critical stage. On 12 May all but one of the working parties reported on the tentative agreements reached after months of discussions.

Among other conclusions emerging from the negotiations there appears to be agreement that a "transitional executive authority" should be set up to monitor the activities of the existing government, to ensure a "climate favourable to free and fair elections". The proposed authority will, among other activities, be involved in monitoring the security forces.

Another working party reached consensus on the need to review existing security legislation, with a view to bringing its provisions into line with "special measures necessary to deal with threats to public order during the [phase of political] transition". It appears that the working party was unable to reach agreement on the need for ending police powers of detention without trial, associated in South Africa, as elsewhere, with serious human rights violations.

The CODESA negotiations are occurring against a background of increasing political violence and terror in the black townships, squatter camps and on commuter trains. The monthly toll in deaths and injuries during 1992 has exceeded that in 1991. In April 1992, for instance, at least 356 people died, victims of targeted assassinations, of unprovoked lethal force by the security forces, of attacks on whole communities by heavily-armed men moving about with impunity, and of randomly inflicted terror on commuters travelling from black residential areas.

The talks are continuing against a background of further revelations of direct involvement in political assassinations by the security forces. In late April 1992 the Natal Supreme Court found that five police officers had carried out the cold-blooded murder of 11 presumed pro-ANC activists and family members in Trust Feed, Natal, in December 1988 at the behest of the local leadership of Inkatha. At the same time the presiding judge found evidence of a cover-up involving police officers at a senior level, beginning at the initial stages of the investigations immediately after the killings and continuing on into 1991.

Some of the officers implicated in the Trust Feed cover-up have been given responsibility for investigating serious allegations of human rights violations by the police in other incidents. Despite the trial judge's call for a public inquiry into evidence of the cover-up of police involvement in the 1988 massacre, the government has ordered only an internal inquiry led by a former head of the police Security Branch and a magistrate associated with a highly controversial treason trial of pro-ANC activists in the late 1980s.

On 8 May 1992 a Johannesburg newspaper, the New Nation, published documentary evidence linking the current Chief of Military Intelligence to the 1985 assassinations of a pro-ANC community leader, Matthew Goniwe, and other activists. In response State President F W de Klerk did not suspend the military officer from duty. He did, however, order a Supreme Court judge to re-open the inquiry into the 1985 killings and promised that "No stone will be left unturned to get to the full truth of this matter". Virtually the same promise was made in 1990 when the State President ordered a judicial commission of inquiry into serious allegations of covert police and military involvement in political assassinations. Despite the 1990 inquiry and a related judicial finding in January 1991 having uncovered evidence of murder, poisoning, kidnapping, arson, perjury and destruction of evidence by members of the South African Police and Defence Force, not a single prosecution has yet resulted.

Note to editors: Amnesty International will be releasing a full report on South Africa next month. No more information is available at this stage.