
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 52/95

TO: PRESS OFFICERS AI INDEX: NWS 11/52/95
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICEDISTR: SC/PO
DATE: 10 MARCH 1995NO OF WORDS: 595

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **ARGENTINA** (the research team will sending this item to a few key Latin America media contacts)

PLEASE NOTE: Because the situation is tense in Burundi at the present moment, in the event of any crisis in those countries, we are asking all sections not to make any statements about any events there until our research mission is safely out by 27 March.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Campaign on Women - 7 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 12/95, 34/95, 37/95, 42/95 & 44/95
Brazil - 27 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 29/95

RWANDA - 6 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

SYRIA - 11 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 32/95

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

CAMBODIA - 14 MARCH - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

EVENTS AND MISSIONS

The details below are for your information only, and there may or may not be media work involved. Can you please not publicize anything until further notice from the IS.

MISSION TO BURUNDI 13 - 27 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

MISSION TO KENYA 16 March - 2 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

News Service 52/95

AI INDEX: AMR 13/WU 01/95
10 MARCH 1995

ARGENTINA: RELATIVES OF THE DISAPPEARED HAVE THE RIGHT TO THE FULL TRUTH

Recent information about mass extermination in the so-called secret camps in Argentina during the years of military rule requires a thorough investigation, Amnesty International said today.

The declaration by Captain Adolfo Francisco Scilingo, an Argentinean former naval officer, could shed new light on the whereabouts of those victims of the extrajudicial executions in which he participated, the circumstances under which those crimes were committed and the identity of those responsible.

"The relatives of the victims have the undeniable right to a full search for the truth and a public identification of those responsible," Amnesty International said.

Legal redress in Argentina has been exhausted because of the Full Stop Law of 1986, the Law of Due Obedience of 1987 and the Presidential Pardons of October 1989 and December 1990. Nevertheless, Amnesty International has consistently emphasised to the Argentinean authorities the need to clarify the fate and whereabouts of the disappeared.

"We have documented and published testimonies of former detainees and relatives of disappeared people since 1976," Amnesty International said today. "Captain Scilingo's testimony goes to confirm what survivors and relatives of the disappeared have been denouncing all along."

According to Scilingo's account, the "disappeared" detainees held at the Naval School of Mechanics (ESMA) were sedated and thrown naked from aircraft into the ocean. Captain Scilingo, who admitted taking part in two of those flights in navy aircrafts, said that between 1500 and 2000 people were executed in that manner.

Background

The National Commission on Disappeared People (CONADEP) -- established in December 1983 to clarify the circumstances in which thousands of people disappeared -- presented its findings to the then Argentinean president, Dr. Raúl Alfonsín, in September 1984. In a report containing numerous interviews with witnesses, CONADEP listed 340 clandestine abduction centres and catalogued 8,960 unresolved disappearances, warning that the true figure might be higher. The CONADEP report provides testimonies by survivors denouncing the practice of the "transfers" -- a euphemism for "extermination".

During the trial in December 1985 of the nine military commanders who had ruled Argentina, the Prosecutor provided details of what it referred to as detention and extermination centres. Evidence was presented to show how persons held in custody at these secret centres were systematically tortured, and how some of the detainees died under torture or were "transferred". The Prosecutor stated that the bodies of many victims were simply abandoned on public thoroughfares or thrown into the River Plate, presumably from airplanes or helicopters, to be washed up later on the Uruguayan or Argentine banks of the river.

ENDS\