
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 67/95

TO: PRESS OFFICERS AI INDEX: NWS 11/67/95
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICEDISTR: SC/PO
DATE: 29 MARCH 1995NO OF WORDS: 1413

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: EXTERNAL - **BAHRAIN** - EMBARGOED FOR 0001 HRS GMT
30 MARCH (this item will be sent to Middle East media)

INTERNAL: NOTE TO PO - NGO ACCREDITATION TO BEIJING CONFERENCE ON WOMEN

PLEASE NOTE: The launch of the Germany report has been put forward to 16 May.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Campaign on Women - 7 March - SEE NEWS SERVICE 12/95, 34/95, 37/95, 42/95 & 44/95
RWANDA - 6 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 37/95

SYRIA - 11 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 32/95

** MONGOLIA - 18 APRIL ** This will coincide with a section-level action and the release of an external document on prison conditions

ETHIOPIA - 19 APRIL - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

TIBET - 9 MAY - SEE NEWS SERVICE 64/95

GERMANY - 16 MAY - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

ROMANIA - 22 MAY - SEE NEWS SERVICE 66/95

TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

BAHRAIN - 30 APRIL - SEE NEWS SERVICE 64/95

JAPAN - 4 MAY - SEE NEWS SERVICE 64/95

ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES - 11 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

IRAN - 31 May - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

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.

Brazil - 28 March (Pierre's visit) - SEE NEWS SERVICE 29/95, 59/95, 60/95

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

MISSION TO HAITI 18 March - 3 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 58/95

** MISSION TO GUATEMALA 21 MARCH - 3 APR **

** MISSION TO PARAGUAY & URUGUAY 22 MARCH - 12 APRIL **

MISSION TO CHAD - 27 April - SEE NEWS SERVICE 59/95

INTERNAL

Note to Press Officers on NGO accreditation to the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing '95.

Recently, there has been extensive press coverage of the issue of NGOs who have been denied accreditation to the Fourth World Conference on Women (FWCW), to be held in Beijing during August and September 1995. We would like to clear up an apparent confusion in sections which seems to have arisen as a result of this coverage.

The main confusion is over the difference between NGO accreditation to the UN Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), and the separate process of NGO registration to the NGO Forum parallel to the IGC.

Since the deadline for accreditation in January 1995, we have information that around 490 NGOs have been denied accreditation to the IGC. At the moment it is difficult to tell the how criteria for accreditation are being implemented and on 28 March NGOs sent a letter to the members of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), the preparatory body for the Beijing conference, asking for a fair and open process for NGO participation.

We will not know whether any NGOs have been refused registration for the NGO Forum, and possibly therefore access to China itself, until the deadline for registration to the NGO Forum passes on 30 April 1995.

There have been specific press reports that the Vatican and another Government had objected to the accreditation of various NGOs to the IGC. At the CSW, the Vatican objected to the accreditation of four branches of an organization called "Catholics for a Free choice", and the Armenian Government objected to an unspecified Armenian NGO. A working group was set up to look into these objections, and on 20 March decided in favour of the organizations.

A LIOP team is currently at the CSW in New York collecting further information about accreditation, and the IS is looking into the possibility of issuing a press release based on this information and on progress on discussions at the CSW about the Platform for Action.

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AI INDEX: MDE 11/WU 01/95

EMBARGOED FOR 0001 HRS GMT, 30 MARCH 1995

BAHRAIN: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS FOR AN END TO KILLINGS, TORTURE AND DETENTIONS WITHOUT TRIAL AND FOR ACCESS TO ITS DELEGATES

Killings, torture and detentions without trial continue in Bahrain as the government seeks to crack down on demonstrators calling for the National Assembly to be allowed to reconvene and for the provisions of the 1973 Constitution to be respected.

"The situation in Bahrain is now critical, with incidents being reported on an almost daily basis", Amnesty International said. "In January we called for urgent human rights safeguards following the fatal shooting of four demonstrators and widespread arbitrary arrests, and for our representatives to visit the country. The government has yet to respond or to take any measures to prevent further violations".

During the past four months, at least seven civilians have been killed in several incidents and scores of others injured as the Ministry of Interior's security forces used live ammunition to quell numerous peaceful demonstrations. Rubber bullets, "birdshot" pellets, tear gas and other weaponry have also been used. The most recent victim was Hamid 'Abdullah Yusuf, a 17-year-old student who died on 26 March 1995 after being shot during protests in al-Duraz the previous day. Two policemen have also been killed since December.

According to many eyewitness accounts, Saudi Arabian riot police were brought in to reinforce Bahrain's security forces. Measures have also been taken to prevent those wounded from receiving medical treatment in hospitals and clinics, including by stationing security forces at the government-funded al-Salmaniya Hospital. At Bahrain International Hospital, which is privately owned, there was harassment and intimidation by the security forces of those admitted for treatment. During protests in al-Sanabes on 17 December, an ambulance called to the scene was prevented by the security forces from taking the wounded to hospital, several eye-witnesses told Amnesty International. Two of those wounded, Hani Hassan al-Wasti and Hani 'Abbas Khamis, died after sustaining serious injuries.

Amnesty International has received testimony from a wide range of sources and has interviewed eyewitnesses, participants in the protests, and former detainees who were later forcibly exiled from Bahrain. The organization has also examined several people who were wounded during the protests and obtained medical evidence regarding their injuries.

Torture has been used to extract information and "confessions" from many detainees, according to the testimony of several people who have been released. At least one detainee, Hussain Qambar, has died in custody, reportedly as a result of torture. Others are said to have been subjected to severe beatings, suspension from the limbs for prolonged periods and, in a few cases, to sexual abuse.

Amnesty International has also recorded a number of cases in which women were beaten or otherwise ill-treated during peaceful protests or during house-to-house searches. In one incident on 11 February, a group of some 20 women who had gathered outside the Ministry of Justice building to call for the release of their detained relatives were surrounded and man-handled as security and police personnel forced them into military vehicles to remove them from the area.

To date, Amnesty International has received the names of over 700 people arrested since December but believes the true number to be far higher. Most arrests have been carried out in predominantly Shi'a Muslim districts in the municipalities of Sitra, Jidd Hafs and the Northern Region. The vast majority of detainees are being held incommunicado without charge or trial in al-Qal'a and Jaw prisons, and have been denied access to their families, defence counsel and independent medical doctors.

On 22 March 11 detainees were brought before the State Security Court, charged with offences including carrying out acts of sabotage and membership of a prohibited organization. All were denied prior access to defence lawyers. At least 19 other detainees charged with sabotage were said by officials to have "confessed" to the charges against them and that they would be brought to trial. Such public statements as to the validity of these charges appear to be undermining the defendants' presumption of innocence and therefore their chances of receiving a fair trial.

"The government of Bahrain has stated that it has dealt with what it has termed 'saboteurs' in accordance with the law. If it has nothing to conceal, then it will have no objection to allowing independent human rights investigators into the country". Amnesty International is calling for its delegates to be given immediate access to the country, including to attend the ongoing trials. The organization has not been able to visit Bahrain since 1987.

Amnesty International calls on the Government of Bahrain to initiate thorough, prompt and impartial investigations into all incidents involving the killing of demonstrators in accordance with the United Nations (UN) Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions. It also calls on the government, as a matter of urgency, to issue clear instructions to the security forces to abide by the UN Basic Principles of the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, which prohibit the intentional lethal use of firearms except "when strictly unavoidable in order to protect life".

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