

PUBLIC

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Death penalty

9 October 1998

BENIN

OYEDELE Noureimi
WATCHINOU Sokenou
ZINSOU Jules
BANKOLE Fatai
SAIBOU Latifou
YEDENOU Dedewanou
OGBON Issa Soule
ELEGBEDE Ganiou

The eight above-named people were sentenced to death in early October 1998 after being convicted of armed robbery and murder. Although no one has been executed in Benin since 1986, it is feared that these eight people could be executed in response to public outrage about a recent upsurge in armed robberies.

There is no further right of appeal against conviction and sentence to a higher jurisdiction.

In July 1998, six other people were sentenced to death *in absentia*. Among these and the above-named people are seven Benin nationals, five Nigerians, one Burkinabè and one Malian.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/airmail letters in French or in your own language:

- acknowledging the gravity of the crimes for which these people have been convicted, but expressing your unconditional opposition to the death penalty on the grounds that it violates the right to life, as stated in Article 3 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- stressing that the death penalty has never been shown to be an effective deterrent to violent crime, and is brutalizing to all involved in its application;
- calling on the authorities to grant clemency to these people and to commute their death sentences to a more humane punishment.

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence

Monsieur Mathieu Kérékou, Président de la République, La Présidence
BP 2028, Cotonou, Benin

Telegrams: President Kérékou, Cotonou, Bénin

Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

Monsieur Ismaël Tidjani Serpos

Garde des Sceaux et Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice, BP 967, Cotonou, Bénin

Fax: + 229 31 34 48

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/ Dear Minister

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 November 1998.

"Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person."

Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Visit the Amnesty International UDHR campaign website on
<http://www.amnesty.excite.com>