

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 17/01/97

14 January 1997

Further information (6) on UA 250/96 (AFR 17/06/96, 31 October 1996) and follow-ups: AFR 17/08/96, 12 November; AFR 17/09/96, 15 November; AFR 17/11/96, 11 December; AFR 17/12/96, 13 December; AFR 17/13/96, 18 December 1996 - Prisoner of conscience/Fear of further POCs

CAMEROON Evariste Menouga)
 Peter William Mandio) journalists
 Daniel Atangana)

Evariste Menouga, a journalist on *Le Nouvel Indépendant* newspaper, was released without charge on 19 December 1996. He had been detained since 27 November 1996. Daniel Atangana, who had been arrested on 10 December 1996, was also released without charge on 29 December 1996. Daniel Atangana was arrested after writing an article for *Le Front Indépendant*, a newspaper which was established when *Le Nouvel Indépendant* was temporarily suspended.

Peter William Mandio, a journalist on the newspaper *Le Nouvel Indépendant* and also director of *Le Front Indépendant*, had earlier been released without charge on 16 December 1996.

In all three cases, the 72-hour period allowed by law before a detainee must be brought before a judicial authority to be charged or released was exceeded. No warrants for the arrest of these journalists were produced, nor were they informed of the accusations against them.

Restrictions on freedom of expression intensified in Cameroon during 1996. At least seven journalists were sentenced to prison terms and several others were arrested and detained without charge. Newspapers were suspended. The increased number of arrests, detention, convictions and imprisonment of journalists appears to be an attempt by the government to inhibit criticism of government policies, prominent government members and those closely associated with them.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send letters or faxes in French, English or your own language:

- welcoming the releases of Evariste Menouga and Daniel Atangana;
- expressing concern, however, about the increasing number of journalists who have been arrested, detained, convicted and imprisoned in Cameroon and reminding the government of its obligations to guarantee the right to freedom of expression under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Cameroon ratified in 1984;
- urging that no journalists be detained or imprisoned solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression.

APPEALS TO:

President

Son Excellence M. Paul Biya
Président de la République
Palais de l'Unité
1000 Yaoundé, République du Cameroun
Fax: +237 221 699

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President Biya

Prime Minister

Mr Peter Mafany Musonge
Premier Ministre
Cabinet du Premier Ministre
Immeuble Étoile
1000 Yaoundé, Cameroon

Fax: +237 235 765

Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre / Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Justice

M. Laurent Ezzo
Ministre de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
1000 Yaoundé, République du Cameroun

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of State for Communication

M. Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni
Ministre d'Etat chargé de la Communication,
Ministère de la Communication
BP 1588, Yaoundé, République du Cameroun

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

- *Le Messenger*, BP 5925, 11 Boulevard de la Liberté, Douala, République du Cameroun
- *Cameroon Post*, BP 1981, Yaoundé, République du Cameroon
- *The Herald*, BP 3659 Messa, Yaoundé, République du Cameroun
- *La Nouvelle Expression*, BP 15333, 12 rue Prince de Galles, Douala, République du Cameroun

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 February 1997.