

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 17/12/96

13 December 1996

Further information 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) - Prisoner of conscience / Fear of further POCs

CAMEROON Evariste Menouga) journalists on *Le Nouvel*
 Peter William Mandio) *Indépendant* newspaper

new name: Daniel Atangana, journalist on *Le Front Indépendant*
 newspaper

In addition to Evariste Menouga and Peter William Mandio, another journalist has recently been arrested. Daniel Atangana, a journalist on an independent weekly newspaper, *Le Front Indépendant*, was arrested on 10 December 1996.

His arrest follows an article which appeared in *Le Front Indépendant* on 2 December about the commander of the presidential guard. Josué Banga Kack, the editorial director of *Le Front Indépendant*, had been arrested on 4 December and held for 48 hours before being released without charge.

The director of publication of *Le Front Indépendant*, Peter William Mandio, also a journalist on the newspaper *Le Nouvel Indépendant*, was also arrested on 4 December and remains in detention. Evariste Menouga, also working for *Le Nouvel Indépendant*, was arrested on 27 November following an article in *Le Nouvel Indépendant* which criticized the Minister of Public Works.

All three journalists are being held by the gendarmerie in Yaoundé. Their detention has exceeded the 72 hours allowed by law before a detainee must be brought before a judicial authority to be charged or released.

Restrictions of freedom of expression have intensified in Cameroon during 1996. At least seven journalists have been sentenced to prison terms; others have been held without charge. Newspapers have been suspended. In some cases there have been serious irregularities in judicial procedures; prosecutions against journalists appear to be attempts to inhibit criticism of prominent government members, those closely associated with them or government policies.

Please continue action as recommended in previous update (AFR 17/11/96, 11 December), incorporating the name of Daniel Atangana.