

16 October 1998

Further information on UA 07/98 (AFR 17/01/98, 8 January 1998) and follow-ups (AFR 17/03/98, 15 January 1998; AFR 17/04/98, 4 March 1998; AFR 17/06/98, 15 April 1998; AFR 17/08/98, 26 June 1998 and AFR 17/10/98, 13 August) - Prisoner of conscience/ Health Concern / Cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment

CAMEROON Pius Njawé, journalist, director of *Le Messager*
Michel Michaut Moussala, journalist, director of *Aurore Plus*

Despite having had his one-year prison sentence confirmed by the Supreme Court on 17 September 1998, prisoner of conscience Pius Njawé was granted a presidential pardon and released from imprisonment on 12 October.

There are, however, renewed concerns for another journalist, Michel Michaut Moussala, who is currently held in the Central Prison, New Bell, in Douala in notoriously harsh conditions.

Michel Michaut Moussala was arrested on 3 September. He had been convicted of defamation (*diffamation*) at the same trial as Pius Njawé, but in a separate case, in January 1998, and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine. The charges related to an article accusing a National Assembly member of the ruling *Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais*, Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, of corruption (*détournement de fonds publics*) and other criminal offences.

New charges of evading arrest (*évasion*) were brought against him because he had not presented himself to the prison authorities following his conviction and sentencing in January. Although these new charges were dismissed by a court on 14 October, Michel Michaut Moussala is still serving the six-month sentence imposed in January.

Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely because of his legitimate professional activities and in violation of his right to freedom of expression.

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

- welcoming the release of Pius Njawé on 12 October 1998 but expressing concern that he was imprisoned as a prisoner of conscience for more than nine months;
- expressing your concern about the arrest and imprisonment on 3 September of Michel Michaut Moussala, whom Amnesty International considers to be a prisoner of conscience;
- urging that he be immediately and conditionally released;
- requesting assurances that he is held in conditions which conform to international standards for the treatment of prisoners;
- reminding the Government of Cameroon of its obligation to guarantee freedom of expression, including under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which it ratified in 1984, and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression".

APPEALS TO:

President

Son Excellence M. Paul Biya
Président de la République, Palais de l'Unité
1000 Yaoundé, République du Cameroun

Telegrams: President, Yaounde, Cameroon

Faxes: + 237 22 16 99

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

Minister of Justice

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

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of Communication

M. René Zé Nguélé
Ministre de la Communication, Ministère de la Communication
1000 Yaoundé, République du Cameroun

Telegrams: Ministre Communication, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Dr Solomon Nfor Gwei, President, National Commission on Human Rights and
Freedoms, PO Box 20317, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Aurore Plus, BP 7042, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Le Messager, BP 5925, 11 Boulevard de la Liberté, Douala, Cameroon

L'Expression, BP 15333, 12 rue Prince de Galles, Douala, Cameroon

Cameroon Post, BP 1981, Yaoundé, Cameroon

The Herald, BP 3659 Messa, Yaoundé, Cameroon

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or you section office, if sending appeals after 27 November 1998.

"Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression".

Article 19, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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