

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 19/06/91  
Distr: UA/SC

2 October 1991

Further information on UA 85/90 (AFR/19/01/90, 27 February 1990, and follow-up AFR 19/05/91, 2 May 1991) - Legal Concern

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: General François Bozize

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On 24 September 1991 General François Bozize and six other co-defendants were acquitted by the High Court of Justice (Haute cour de Justice) in Bangui of a number of violent offences. However the General, a former government minister, was immediately rearrested and imprisoned at Bangui's Ngaragba central prison. He had been detained at Roux military camp (Camp de Roux) in Bangui since August 1989. He is not known to have been charged with any other offences. Two of his co-defendants were reportedly remanded in custody on criminal charges while three others were released. Another one reportedly died in detention several months ago, apparently as a result of bad prison conditions and lack of adequate medical care.

The seven were acquitted on the charges of endangering the security of the state, complicity to commit murder and several other violent offences. The prosecution apparently failed to prove any of the charges brought against François Bozize and his co-defendants.

François Bozize was forcibly repatriated from Benin with a total of 11 others who had been living in exile for up to eight years. Five are known to have been released untried in April 1991, and there were some reports that all of those repatriated from Benin were released with the single exception of François Bozize. It is unclear whether his six co-defendants were among those forcibly repatriated in August 1989 from the Republic of Benin.

Amnesty International is concerned that François Bozize has been redetained following his acquittal by the High Court of Justice. His continued detention appears to be an attempt by government authorities to override the court's decision and thus to usurp the rule of law. Following his acquittal, Amnesty International is concerned that François Bozize may be a prisoner of conscience held on the basis of his non-violent political activities. The organization is further concerned that in the past he has been subjected to severe ill-treatment.

Amnesty International has learned that since his return to Bangui in August 1989, François Bozize has not been allowed visits by his relatives and was denied medical attention after being subjected to severe beatings soon after his arrival in Bangui and again in July 1990 when the authorities claimed that he had tried to escape. He is reported to be inadequately fed and to be sleeping on a bare floor without bedding.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/telegrams/airmail letters, in FRENCH, if possible:**

- expressing concern that François Bozize was redetained despite being

acquitted, and asking what the legal basis for his continued detention is;

- pointing out that his detention appears to be unlawful and arbitrary, and as such a violation of fundamental human rights, including those guaranteed by Central African Code of Penal Procedure, international human rights treaties to which the Central African Republic is a party (such as the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights);

- expressing concern at reports that François Bozize continues to be subjected to particularly harsh detention conditions and calling on the authorities to ensure that he is allowed immediate access to medical care and visits by his relatives and is treated humanely at all times;
- expressing concern that François Bozize appears to be a prisoner of conscience held on the basis of his non-violent political activities;
- urging the authorities to release François Bozize without delay if he has not been charged with recognizably criminal offences unrelated to those for which he has already been tried and acquitted.

**APPEALS TO:**

Son Excellence **Monsieur le Président de la République**  
 Général d'Armée André KOLINGBA  
 Président de la République  
 Palais de la Renaissance  
 Bangui, République centrafricaine  
**Telexes: 5300 PRESICAB RC or 5201 VICEPRE RC**  
**Telegrams: President KOLINGBA Bangui, RCA**

Monsieur Edouard FRANK **Monsieur le Premier Ministre**  
 Premier Ministre et Chef du Gouvernement  
 Palais de la Renaissance  
 Bangui, République centrafricaine  
**Telexes: 5300 PRESICAB RC or 5201 VICEPRE RC**  
**Telegrams: Premier Ministre Frank, Bangui, RCA**

Monsieur Jean KPWOKA **Monsieur le Ministre**  
 Ministre de la Justice et Garde des Sceaux  
 Ministère de la Justice  
 Bangui, République centrafricaine  
**Telexes: 5293 JUSTICE RC**  
**Telegrams: Ministre Justice Kpwoka, Bangui, RCA**

**COPIES TO:**

Monsieur Christophe GRELOMBE  
 Conseiller en matières de la Défense au Président  
 de la République  
 Présidence de la République  
 Palais de la Renaissance  
 Bangui, République centrafricaine

Monsieur Laurent GOMINA-PAMPALI  
 Ministre des Affaires étrangères  
 Ministère des Affaires étrangères  
 BP 936  
 Bangui, République centrafricaine

Monsieur Ismaila NIMAGA  
 Ministre de la Sécurité publique  
 et de l'Administration du territoire  
 Ministère de l'Administration du territoire  
 Bangui, République centrafricaine

and to diplomatic representatives of the Central African Republic in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 November 1991.