

PUBLIC

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To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / Africa sub-regional team
cc: Congo coordinators & groups with a Congo Action File (for action)
CAFRAN coordinators (for information/optional action)
Date: 25 February 1998

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION
Albert MOUNGONDO
CONGO

Theme: Detention without trial/medical attention

Summary

Please see the information attached on the detention of Albert Mougondo, imprisoned without charge or trial since mid-November 1998 following political violence and the seizure of power in the country. Although little information is available from Congo, Amnesty International believes him to have been arrested for his political affiliations rather than for any real offence. He is said to be denied access to medical attention. [The Republic of Congo, whose capital is Brazzaville, is not to be confused with the Democratic Republic of Congo whose capital is Kinshasa.]

Recommended action

Letters are requested from medical professionals, preferably in French

- ! raising the case of Albert Mougondo and seeking information on the reasons for his arrest
- ! expressing concern that he is being held without charge or trial and urging that he appears to have been detained for his political affiliations
- ! urging that he be released from detention if he is not to be charged with a recognizably political offence and brought to trial
- ! noting the problems he has with his eyesight and asking what medical attention the authorities intend to provide while he remains in detention

Addresses

General Denis Sassou Nguesso
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Brazzaville
République du Congo

Colonel Pierre Oba
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Brazzaville
République du Congo

M. Pierre Nze
Ministre d'Etat, Ministre de la Justice,
Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
Brazzaville
République du Congo

Colonel Marcel Ntsourou
Gouverneur militaire et civile de la région
de Kouilou
Pointe-Noire
République du Congo
(Governor of the region in which Albert
Mougondo is held)

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**Albert MOUNGONDO
CONGO**

Amnesty International has raised the case of Albert Moungondo's detention with the Congolese authorities. He has been imprisoned since November 1997 without charge or trial and there is no indication that charges are about to be brought. His arrest on 17 November 1997 came in the wake of civil war which brought a change of government in October 1997 when former President Sassou Nguesso acceded to power again with the aid of militia, overthrowing the elected government of President Pascal Lissouba.

The fighting began in June 1997 some weeks before presidential elections were due. President Lissouba accused his main political rival, Denis Sassou Nguesso, of mounting a coup while the latter accused Pascal Lissouba and his followers of fomenting violence in order to postpone the elections and remain in power.

Denis Sassou Nguesso took power in October 1997 and following this, scores of people suspected of loyalty to the previous government were killed and others arrested. Although some of those arrested were later released, others remain imprisoned without charge or trial, including Albert Moungondo. A company director, he was a member of a new political party, the Convention of Democrats for Unity and the Republic, and was accused of giving shelter to Jacques Mouanda Mpassi, a minister in the former government who is also President of the Convention of Democrats for Unity and the Republic and who had been arrested the previous day while attempting to leave the country.

No formal charges have been brought against him and, given the level of instability that remains in the country following the political violence, it is unclear as yet how long he is likely to remain in detention or how soon, if at all, charges might be brought. He is currently in custody at the police commissariat in the port of Pointe-Noire.

Albert Moungondo is reported to be in need of surgery for very advanced cataracts and, although he has access to family visits, he is said to have no access to medical attention. Amnesty International is particularly concerned, however, that he should be released from custody if he is not to be charged with any recognizable criminal offence and brought to trial. It has raised his case and those of others held without charge with the Congolese authorities and is asking them to account for his detention.

To: Medical groups
Congo coordinators
Groups with a Congo file

AI Index: AFR 22/02/98/correction

From: Medical Office

3 March 1998

CORRECTION
MEDICAL ACTION
Albert MOUNGONDO
CONGO
(AI Index: AFR 22/02/98 - 25 February 1998)

We apologise that there were two typographical mistakes in this action.

Both occur on the first page.

A) Page 1; paragraph 1; line 2; under "summary": "imprisoned without charge or trial since November 1998" should read "imprisoned without charge or trial since November **1997**".

B) Under "recommended action", recommended action no. 3 should read "urging that he be released from detention if he is not to be charged with a recognizably "**criminal**" offence and **not** "political".

We would appreciate it if you could draw these to the attention of letter writers (particularly the error in the recommended action.)

With thanks in advance and apologies again.