

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal Concern/Torture

3 October 1990

GUINEA: Bakary SAKHO, aged 50, from Lola, a member of parliament under the late President Sékou Touré
Nansadi BERETE, aged 40, an engineer, sentenced to death in 1987 in absentia by the State Security Court in connection with a coup attempt in July 1985; returned to Guinea following a Presidential amnesty in February 1990 which granted amnesty to those convicted of political offences
N'Vanfing KOUROUMA, businessman, aged 45, member of the Coordination Committee of the Rassemblement du Peuple Guinéen (RPG), the Guinean People's Organization

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The three men named above have been detained since early August 1990 in connection with the distribution of a copy of the RPG's newspaper, Malanyi (Unity), which criticized government policies, accused the government of corruption and called for a change of government. They have been charged with atteinte à la sécurité intérieure de l'Etat, actions endangering the internal security of the state. They are currently held in the central prison in the capital, Conakry, and are to be tried before the State Security Court. Amnesty International is concerned they may be prisoners of conscience, held for expressing their conscientiously-held political views.

They were among at least 22 people arrested in August 1990 in the towns of N'Zérékoré, Lola and Conakry when the security forces apparently discovered Nansadi Béréte in possession of copies of Malanyi, while searching his car in the N'Zérékoré area, in the south of the country. The others are reported to have been released uncharged.

Some of the detainees are reported to have been subjected to torture or ill-treatment while in the custody of the security forces, being denied food and water for five days. Bakary Sakho is believed to have been tied up and beaten in the presence of his relatives and neighbours soon after his arrest in Lola.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent years, members and sympathizers of the RPG have been targeted for arrest and detention for distributing the organization's newspapers. When Amnesty International appealed on behalf of six detained in late 1989, the authorities denied that they were in custody. The practice of depriving political prisoners of all food and drink was common before April 1984, under President Sékou Touré's government, when it was also used as a way of killing prisoners.

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

- expressing concern that the people named above appear to have been detained for possessing or distributing a newspaper, Malanyi, which does not advocate violence;

- inquiring about the legal basis for the charges brought against the three men;

- expressing concern at reports that those held may have been subjected to torture and seek assurances that they are protected from further ill-treatment;

- urging that they have prompt and regular access to relatives, legal counsel and independent medical personnel;
- calling for an inquiry into allegations that they have been ill-treated while in custody;
- explaining that Amnesty International believes they may be prisoners of conscience arrested for exercising their right to freedom of expression and appealing to the authorities to release them immediately.

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence
 Le Général de Brigade
 Lansana CONTE
 Président du Comité Militaire de Redressement National
 Présidence de la République
 Conakry, Guinea

Telegrams: President Conte, Conakry, Guinea
 Telexes: 22323 PRG GE or 22345 PALPEU GE

Son Excellence
 Monsieur Jean TRAORE
 Ministre des Affaires étrangères
 Ministère des Affaires étrangères
 Conakry, Guinea

Telegrams: Ministre Affaires Etrangères, Conakry, Guinea
 Telexes: 22334 MINAFE GE

Monsieur Bassirou BARRY
 Ministre de la Justice
 Ministère de la Justice
 Conakry, Guinea

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Conakry, Guinea
 Telexes: 22334 MINAFE GE (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Lieutenant-Colonel
 Babacar N'DIAYE
 Ministre-Secrétaire permanent du Comité Militaire de Redressement National
 La Présidence
 Conakry, Guinea

Telegrams: Ministre permanent N'Diaye, Conakry, Guinea
 Telexes: 22323 PRG GE or 22345 PALPEU GE

COPIES TO:

- Horoya (newspaper), BP 341, Conakry, Guinea
- Organisation guinéenne des droits de l'homme, BP 615 bis, Conakry, Guinea

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 November 1990.