

UA 304/00

Torture

COTE D'IVOIRE

Chief Sergeant Souleymane DIOMANDE, known as "la Grenade"
Corporal Vada BAMBA
Corporal Ménassa BAMBA
Corporal Finaly BAKOYOKO
Captain Issa SACKO
Sergeant Seydou KONE
Corporal Abourahamane ISSA
Corporal Siaka OUATTARA
At least 20 others

At least 28 soldiers have been arrested and severely tortured after an attack on the private residence of the Head of state, General Robert Gueï on 18 September 2000. At least one is reported to have died as a result of torture.

Most, if not all, are from the General's bodyguard. They were arrested on suspicion of plotting this attack. The first five soldiers named above were shown on television after they were arrested, but they have been detained incommunicado ever since. Their relatives have looked for them in all the military prisons in Abidjan, but the authorities have refused to give them any information. Some or all of these five soldiers are reportedly held at the former military camp of Akuedo, called "La Poudrière", ("The powder magazine") where most of the Ivorian army's guns and ammunition are held.

The Minister of Security, Lansana Palenfo, who was accused on 26 September of involvement in the attack, and who is now in hiding, said publicly yesterday on an international radio station, *Radio France Internationale*, that all the soldiers who have been arrested have been tortured, and that he had "information that most of our guards, those who were taken in for questioning, were killed".

At least one soldier arrested in connection with the attack is known to have died. Relatives of SanSan Kampiré found his body in the morgue of the *Centre Hospitalier Universitaire* in Treichville, near Abidjan. The people who saw the corpse told Amnesty International that it was covered in blood, but that they could not see any bullet wounds.

Other soldiers including Sergeant Seydou Kone, Corporal Abourahamane Issa and Corporal Siaka Outtara have reportedly been severely tortured at a military prison, the *Maison d'Arrêt militaire d'Abidjan* (MAMA), where they have been held since they were arrested early last week.

Other people arrested since the attack on the Head of State's residence, including civilians, are being held incommunicado at the gendarmerie in Agban, near Abidjan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

General Robert Gueï came to power in a military Coup on 24 December 1999. Since then there have been numerous attacks on human rights, which have threatened the very foundation of the rule of law.

Groups of soldiers, believing themselves to be above the law, have set up a parallel system of justice, which has marginalised the legal institutions of justice. They have killed, sometimes in public, presumed lawbreakers, intimidated and assaulted lawyers and magistrates, and arrested and ill-treated journalists. Amnesty International sent a fact-finding mission to Côte d'Ivoire in May 2000, which met with General Gueï. He did not deny that certain soldiers had committed abuses. (See *Ivory Coast: some military personnel believe they have impunity above the law* (AFR 31/03/00 F), 19 September 2000.)

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of at least 28 soldiers arrested after the attack on General Robert Gueï's private residence, who have reportedly been tortured;
- urging the authorities to immediately stop torturing these people and asking them to provide them with enough food and water and adequate medical treatment;
- urging the authorities to stop incommunicado detention and allow those detained to have access to their relatives;
- urging the authorities to open immediately a thorough and independent enquiry into these allegations of torture, and to carry out an autopsy on Sansan Kampiré, whose relatives found his corpse in the morgue of the *Centre Hospitalier Universitaire* in Treichville, and to bring those responsible to justice.

APPEALS TO:

1) Head of State

Son Excellence
Général Robert Gueï
La Présidence, Boulevard Clozel, Abidjan
Côte d'Ivoire

Faxes: + 225 20 32 90 24

Salutation: Monsieur le Chef de l'Etat / Dear Head of State

2) Minister of Defence

Colonel Honoré Douty
Ministère de la Défense
BP V 11 ABIDJAN
Côte d'Ivoire

Faxes: + 225 20 21 34 25

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

3) Minister of Interior

Colonel MOUASSI GRENA
Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la décentralisation
BP.V 121 Abidjan
ABIDJAN
Côte d'Ivoire

Faxes: + 225 20 32 47 35

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

4) Minister Of Justice

Colonel Major Pascal Konan Yao
Garde des Sceaux, Ministre de la Justice
BP V 107 Abidjan
ABIDJAN
Côte d'Ivoire

Faxes: 225 20 33 12 59

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of External Relations

M. Charles Gomis
Ministre des Relations Extérieures
BP V 109 Abidjan
ABIDJAN
Côte d'Ivoire

Faxes: + 225 20 33 17 96

Chef d'Etat Major des Forces Armées Nationales de Côte d'Ivoire (FANCI)

Général Soumaïla DIABAGATE
Ministère de la Défense
BPV 11 Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

Directeur Général de la Police Nationale

Colonel Emile Troh GONDOH
BPV 101 Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

and to diplomatic representatives of Côte d'Ivoire accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 November 2000.