

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 55/04/91

Distr: UA/SC

28 March 1991

Further information on UA 468/90 (AFR 55/05/90) 16 November 1990, and follow-ups AFR 55/06/90 (23 November), AFR 55/07/90 (11 December 1990), AFR 55/01/91 (18 January 1991), AFR 55/02/91 (20 February 1991) and AFR 55/03/91 (15 March 1991) - Legal/Health Concern

SWAZILAND: Sabelo DLAMINI
 Boy MAGAGULA
 Dominic MNGOMEZULU
 Ray RUSSON
 Mphandlana SHONGWE

The five men named above were released from administrative detention on 22 March 1991. At the time of their release all were in hospital in Mbabane except Mphandlana Shongwe, who had resumed taking food because of ill-health resulting from his hunger-strike in January and was still in prison. They were taken from hospital or prison to the palace of King Mswati III, where they were officially informed of their release. Mphandlana Shongwe was then released from prison custody but the other four returned to hospital to continue their treatment. Ray Russon left hospital on 24 March and the others on 25 March.

On 23 March 1991 Mphandlana Shongwe was again arrested, this time by officers of the Swaziland army, apparently because he was wearing military uniform without permission. He was held overnight and released on 24 March. It is not known whether the authorities intend to prosecute him for this alleged offence.

During the detainees' visit to the palace to receive their release orders, Sabelo Dlamini and Mphandlana Shongwe were told that they were being released on condition that Sabelo Dlamini did not re-enter the campus of the University of Swaziland, where he was enrolled as a law student, and Mphandlana Shongwe did not re-enter William Pitcher teacher training college. There were no conditions placed upon their three fellow-detainees. However, Ray Russon is still suspended from his job as a sociology lecturer at the University of Swaziland.

These five men have undertaken several protest hunger-strikes since their detention in November 1990. Ray Russon in particular is in poor health from stomach ulcers which have been exacerbated by his hunger-strikes and require continuing medical treatment. Boy Magagula is also reported to be very weak.

Two Amnesty International delegates visited Swaziland from 23 to 27 March 1991 to discuss Amnesty International's concerns with the Swaziland authorities. Prior to their visit, Amnesty International members in a number of countries sought meetings with their local Swaziland representative to raise Amnesty International's concerns. Reports appeared in the Southern African press regarding Amnesty International's intended visit to Swaziland. A Swaziland member of parliament reportedly raised in the parliament on 19 March the increasing international concern about Swaziland's human rights record and the impending Amnesty International delegation. In addition, the United States government issued a statement on 14 March condemning the renewal of the detention orders and the practice of detention without charge or trial.

No further action is requested. Thank you to all who appealed on behalf of these prisoners of conscience, who also wish to convey their thanks.