

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 57/02/91

Distr: UA/SC

UA 125/91

Unlawful Killings

12 April 1991

TOGO

Milehoho Akoko
Marcel Gokou
and at least 24 others

The people named above are reported to be among a group of at least 26 people have been unlawfully killed by soldiers on about 9 and 10 April 1991 at the time of anti-government demonstrations in Lomé. Their bodies were discovered in a lagoon on 11 April 1991 suggesting that the soldiers responsible for the killings tried to hide the corpses soon after the killings had taken place, rather than admit that the deaths had occurred. Children and women are among those killed. The brother of one of the dead women, Milehoho Akoko, is reported to have said that he had seen her being beaten up by soldiers at a checkpoint during anti-government demonstrations in Lomé's Ba district on 10 April 1991. No details are available yet about the circumstances in which the killings took place. In addition to these unacknowledged killings, two young men were killed by soldiers on 5 April when they tried to topple a statue of President Gnassingbé Eyadema, situated next to the headquarters of the Rassemblement du Peuple togolais (RPF), Alliance of Togolese People, the ruling party in Togo.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The killings occurred in the context of growing opposition to President Eyadema. Following a week of pro-democracy demonstrations in mid-March 1991 the head of state met with opposition leaders on 18 March and accepted their demands: a general amnesty for imprisoned government opponents, the convening of a national political conference and rapid move towards multi-party democracy.

A policeman and a 12 year-old-boy are reported to have been killed during a demonstration on 16 March 1991 and others are reported to have been injured. Members of the armed forces who dispersed the demonstrations are reported to have used unnecessary force against the demonstrators who were initially making calls for multi-party democracy without using violence. Rioting later broke out in various parts of Lomé. Maître Yawo Agboyibor, a human rights and pro-democracy activist, was subjected to serious threats by members of the security service. On 16 March 1991, his two cars were burnt and a group of at least 50 armed men came to his house, and when they failed to find him, they vandalized and burnt it. His wife and one cousin were severely beaten by the assailants. Witnesses have alleged that some of them were soldiers.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern about the apparently unlawful killing of Milehoho Akoko, Marcel Gokou and up to 24 others whose bodies have recently been found in a lagoon in Lomé;

- expressing concern that members of the security forces appear to have tried to hide the bodies of civilians they had killed, thereby avoiding being held responsible and accountable for the deaths, and suggesting the deaths were probably unlawful;

- calling on the government to initiate an immediate and impartial investigation into the killings with a view to the prosecution of military or security personnel found to be responsible either for unlawful killings or other offences.

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence
Général Gnassingbe EYADEMA
Président de la République
Palais présidentiel
Avenue de la Marina
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: President Eyadema, Lome, Togo

Telexes: 5201 presitogo

Son Excellence
Monsieur Ayaoui ADODO
Ministre des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération
Ministère des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: Ministre Affaires Etrangères Adodo, Lome, Togo

Telexes: 5239 DIPLOTOGO

Son Excellence
Général Bitokotipou GNAGNINIM
Ministre de la Justice,
Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
Rue Colonel de Roux
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: Ministre Justice Gnagninim, Lome, Togo

Son Excellence
Général Yao Mawuliklimi AMEYI
Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité
Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur Ameyi, Lome, Togo

Président de la Commission
nationale des droits de l'homme
Commission nationale des droits
de l'homme
62 Avenue du 24 janvier
BP 3222
Lomé, TOGO

**Telegrams: President Commission Nationale
droits de l'homme, Lome, Togo**

Telex; 5074 AGBOY-TO

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Togo in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 24 May 1991.