

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible extrajudicial executions

22 May 1995

BURKINA FASO

Blaise Sidiyani, aged 18, school student

Emile Zigani, aged 14, school student

The killing of two students by security forces during a demonstration in early May 1995 has led to strikes and further demonstrations in protest, raising fears that further deaths will occur unless immediate steps are taken to curb excessive use of force by Burkina Faso's security forces.

On 9 May, in Garango, 190 km south of the capital, Ouagadougou, two school students, Blaise Sidiyani and Emile Zigani, were shot dead by the security forces during a demonstration calling on the authorities to meet teachers' demands for salary increases. The demonstration began peacefully but became violent when stones were thrown at buildings; several members of the security forces were reported to have been wounded. According to reports, the students began to disperse after members of a *brigade de gendarmerie* fired shots into the air. However, while the students were running away, Blaise Sidiyani received two shots in the back, killing him. Emile Zigani, who was apparently trying to hide in a bush, died after receiving a shot in the head.

While governments have the right to arrest and bring to justice those suspected of criminal acts, the use of firearms by the security forces should conform to international standards on the use of force (see below).

According to reports, requests for an independent autopsy were refused by the security forces. The *Mouvement burkinabè des droits de l'homme et des peuples* (MBDHP), Burkinabè Movement for Human and Peoples' Rights, has asked the government to set up an impartial inquiry into the killings and to bring those responsible to justice.

On 15 May, the *Association nationale des étudiants du Burkina* (ANEB), National Association of Burkinabè Students, held a meeting to call for a strike at the University of Ouagadougou. During this meeting the president of ANEB was reported to have been physically assaulted by members of the security forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Secondary school and higher education teachers in Burkina Faso have refused for several months to organize examinations in protest against the government's failure to meet their demands for salary increases. School students who fear losing a year's study began to demonstrate in late April 1995. On 4 May 1995 the security forces briefly detained several students in Bobo-Dioulasso, 360 km south-west of Ouagadougou, after an apparently peaceful demonstration.

Article 3 of the United Nations Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, adopted in 1979, states that "Law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duty". Paragraph 3 of the same article adds that "The use of firearms is considered an extreme measure. Every effort should be made to exclude the use of firearms, especially against children. In

general, firearms should not be used except when a suspected offender offers armed resistance or otherwise jeopardizes the lives of others and less extreme measures are not sufficient to restrain or apprehend the suspected offender. In every instance in which a firearm is discharged, a report should be made promptly to the competent authorities."

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/airmail letters preferably in French, or otherwise in your own language:

- expressing concern at the killing by security forces of Blaise Sidiyani and Emile Zigani;
- urging the authorities to initiate an independent and impartial inquiry into these killings and to bring those responsible to justice;
- urging the authorities to take immediate steps to curb the use of lethal weapons by the security forces against unarmed civilians and to make them accountable for their actions;
- calling on the authorities to establish strict guidelines for the use of lethal force, in accordance with international standards, and to issue public instructions to all members of the security forces that human rights violations, including the killing and wounding of unarmed civilians, are criminal offences and perpetrators will be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO:

President:

Son Excellence
 Capitaine Blaise Compaoré
 Président, Chef de l'Etat et du Gouvernement
 La Présidence
 BP 7031
 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Telegrams: Président, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Your Excellency

Prime Minister:

Monsieur Marc-Christian Roch Kaboré
 Premier Ministre
 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Telegrams: Premier Ministre, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre / Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Defence:

Monsieur Kanidou Nabaho
 Ministre d'Etat chargé de la Défense
 Ministère de la Défense
 BP 496
 Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso

Telexes: 5297
Telegrams: Ministre de Défense, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES OF APPEALS TO:

M. Tobignanré Zanré
 Préfet de Tenkodogo
 Préfecture de Tenkodogo
 Province de Boulgou

Burkina Faso

M. Halidou Ouedraogo
Président du Mouvement burkinabè des droits de l'homme et des peuples (MBDHP)
01 BP 2055
Ouagadougou 01, Burkina Faso

M. Edouard Ouedraogo
Directeur de Publication
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and to diplomatic representatives of Burkina Faso in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your Section office, if sending appeals after 7 July 1995.