

PUBLIC

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UA 303/00

Fear for safety

28 September 2000

SOLOMON ISLANDS Duran Angiki (journalist), his wife and 3 children
 Dykes Angiki (Duran Angiki's uncle), his wife and 7
 children

A prominent journalist, Duran Angiki, and his family are in grave danger after they have repeatedly been threatened by an armed opposition group.

Duran Angiki and his uncle, Dykes Angiki, have received several threatening phone calls from the spokesperson for the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF), lawyer Andrew Nori. Andrew Nori has informed Duran Angiki that MEF members are searching for him, and that his wife, children and other relatives, including the family of his uncle, Dykes Angiki, are also at risk.

Duran Angiki, who is based in the capital, Honiara, has been reporting on the ethnic conflict and the role played in it by armed opposition groups. He recently alleged that Andrew Nori had been paid by the Solomon Islands' government for his legal services to the MEF, in a report published by the online Pacific news service, *Pasifik Nius*. On 27 September, Andrew Nori demanded that Angiki issue a public retraction and apology for this report within one week.

Two journalists writing for the *Solomon Star* newspaper, which is sympathetic to the MEF, are reported to have fled Honiara in the past few weeks after being threatened by the MEF.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The MEF is a paramilitary group supported by sections of the police. In June it led a coup, forcing the Prime Minister to resign and the parliament to form a new government. The new Prime Minister promised to consider an amnesty for armed groups involved in the conflict, as an incentive for a cease-fire.

Since then, civil society groups and journalists, who have warned against the idea of a blanket amnesty for paramilitary groups that have committed human rights abuses, have increasingly been threatened or attacked by MEF (see UA 282/00, ASA 43/08/00, 13 September 2000).

All sides to the ethnic conflict have been responsible for human rights violations, and so far there has been almost complete impunity for those responsible. Amnesty International is particularly concerned at violations of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which forbids governments and armed opposition groups alike to torture or deliberately kill civilians taking no part in hostilities, to harm those who are wounded, captured or seeking to surrender, or to take hostages.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that the Malaita Eagle Force has threatened Duran Angiki, his family and other journalists for their peaceful exercise of the right to freedom of expression, association and assembly;
- urging the MEF leadership to issue a clear statement condemning any violence or intimidation against civilians, including journalists;

- appealing to the MEF to immediately halt attacks on people taking no direct part in hostilities.

To the Prime Minister:

- expressing concern at threats made by members of the Malaita Eagle Force against Duran Angiki, his family and other journalists;
- urging the government to publicly condemn any violence and intimidation against civilians, and asking them to do everything within their power to provide Duran Angiki, his family and other journalists with protection from such attacks.

APPEALS TO:

Malaita Eagle Force Command
Andrew Nori & Lesley Kwaige
Bridge Lawyers, Barristers & Solicitors
PO Box 821
Honiara
Solomon Islands (Southwest Pacific)
Fax: + 677 20195
Salutation: Dear Mr Nori and Mr. Kwaige

The Hon. Mannaseh Sogavare MP
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box G1
Honiara,
Solomon Islands (South Pacific)
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Solomon Islands
Fax: + 677 26088/25470
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

COPIES TO:

diplomatic representatives of the Solomon Islands accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 November.