

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture/Legal Concern

21 November 1991

CAMEROON

Senfo TONKAM, student leader

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Amnesty International is seriously concerned about the safety of Senfo Tonkam, a student leader, who was arrested by security forces in Douala during the night of 17/18 November 1991. His present whereabouts are unknown and there are fears that he will be tortured while held in incommunicado detention.

Senfo Tonkam was arrested after attending a meeting organised in Douala by the coordinating committee of Cameroon opposition parties at which he was representing a student organization. It appears that he may be a prisoner of conscience, detained only because of his non-violent opposition to the government.

He was previously arrested in May 1991 and charged with organizing a public meeting without permission. He was convicted in July 1991 and received a six months' suspended sentence.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of the torture and ill-treatment of prisoners in Cameroon. During 1991 there has been an emerging pattern of short-term detention and ill-treatment in police custody. In September 1991 at least 15 prominent members and leaders of newly formed-opposition groups were arrested in Douala and detained without charge for about 24 hours. During this time they were reported to have been tortured and ill-treated and held in harsh and unsanitary conditions (see Cameroon: Torture and ill-treatment, AI Index: AFR 17/09/91, of November 1991).

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

- expressing concern about reports that Senfo Tonkam was arrested in Douala during the night of 17/18 November 1991;
- urging that he be humanely treated while in detention;
- appealing for his place of detention to be made known, and for him to be allowed immediate access to a lawyer, members of his family and a doctor of his own choice;
- calling for him to be released immediately if, as it appears, he has

been detained solely because of his non-violent opposition to the government.

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**APPEALS TO**

1) President:

Son Excellence Monsieur Paul Biya  
Président de la République  
Palais de la Présidence  
1000 Yaoundé, Cameroon

**Monsieur le Président**  
**Dear Mr President**

**Telegrams: President Biya, Yaounde, Cameroon**

**Faxes: + 237 22 08 07**

**Telexes: 8207 PRESID KN**

**8230 PRESID2 KN**

**8595 PRESID B KN**

2) Prime Minister:

M. Sadou Hayatou  
Premier Ministre  
Palais de la Présidence  
1000 Yaoundé  
Cameroon

**Monsieur le Premier Ministre**  
**Dear Prime Minister**

**Telegrams: Premier Ministre Hayatou, Yaounde, Cameroon**

3) Director of National Security:

Monsieur Jean Fochivé  
Directeur Sûreté nationale  
Centre national d'études et de recherches  
Yaoundé, Cameroon

**Monsieur le Directeur**  
**Dear Director**

**Telegrams: Directeur Surete nationale Fochive, Yaounde, Cameroon**

**COPIES TO SOME OF THE FOLLOWING NEWSPAPERS:**

La Gazette, BP 5485, Douala, Cameroon

Le Mont Cameroon, BP 3979, Douala, Cameroon

Cameroon Post, BP 1981, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Peuple d'Afrique, BP 1287, Yaoundé, Cameroon

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 January 1992.