

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 191/94 (AFR 31/01/94, 18 May 1994) - Legal concern / Fear of ill-treatment

COTE D'IVOIRE : Guirao Blé, deputy secretary general of the *Fédération estudiantine et scolaire de Côte d'Ivoire* (FESCI),
Ivoirian Federation of Student and School Pupils

and at least 15 other FESCI members including
Rosalie Kouamé
Danthe Apolos
Naminata Ouatara
Meite Nalansana
Orabera Tate

Twenty-five students members of FESCI, including all those listed above, were released on 31 May 1994 after they had made what appeared to be a forced public apology on television. The students acknowledged that they were mistaken and promised to resume their classes at university.

After their arrest on 15 May, the students were held incommunicado for two weeks, far beyond the maximum 96 hours allowed under Ivoirian law. The Ivory Coast Security Minister Gaston Oueassenan-Kone said on 26 May that the students were held incommunicado at a police barracks and that he could not allow visits for security reasons.

The students were on strike to call for the release of another FESCI activist, Eugène Gonthy, who was sentenced to one year's imprisonment on 29 March 1994 in Bouaké (290 km north of Abidjan). In an appeal trial on 20 May, Eugène Gonthy received a two years' sentence despite the fact that the prosecution were apparently unable to provide any evidence to demonstrate his personal involvement in any acts of violence. Amnesty International believes that he may be a prisoner of conscience, convicted solely because of his FESCI activities. At least five other students arrested with Eugène Gonthy remain in detention without trial. Amnesty International will continue to raise these cases with the authorities, but no further action is required by the Urgent Action Network.

Please send no further appeals. Thank you to all those who appealed on behalf of the students.