

PUBLIC

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Further information on Extra 52/98 (AFR 32/23/98, 30 July 1998) and follow-up (AFR 32/28/98, 30 September 1998) - Legal concern / Potential prisoners of conscience / Fear of Torture or ill-treatment

KENYA **Juma Kiplenge, lawyer and human rights defender
and 13 others**

Amnesty International has recently learned that charges of incitement to violence and unlawful assembly brought against Juma Kiplenge and 13 others in Kabernet were withdrawn on 16 October 1998.

It was feared that Juma Kiplenge and the others were at risk of being convicted after an unfair trial and also would have been considered prisoners of conscience. If convicted they would have faced a five year prison sentence in a country where prison conditions amount to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, or punishment. The magistrate hearing the case had reportedly stated, at a previous hearing, that he would convict the defendants regardless of the evidence heard in court "because they are trouble makers".

Juma Kiplenge and his co-accused were arrested and charged after organizing and attending a peaceful one day cultural event in October 1997, violently broken up by police. Juma Kiplenge has repeatedly been harassed by the Kenyan authorities. He has also had death threats made against him. Similar charges brought against Juma Kiplenge in Nakuru were withdrawn on 23 September 1998. Amnesty International believe the charges in both cases to be politically-motivated.

Juma Kiplenge has said, "I would like to take this opportunity to thank the entire Amnesty International membership for their Urgent Action letters that led to our case being withdrawn. Please pass my regards to all your colleagues."

No further action is required. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.