

EXTRA 55/99

Fear of Imminent Execution

27 April 1999

UGANDA Haji Musa Ssebirumbi, Emmanuel Kasujja, Yefusa Khamali, Justus Robert Bashekana, Benson Komakech, Dauson John Bageya, Erizefani Kasakya, Amisi Katarikawe, Bashir Kanunyuzi, Sowedi Kanunyuzi, Jeflin Lubega, Stephen Sunday, Richard Odongpiny-Omal, Sisto Obwoma, Celestino Olango, Leo Nyendwoha, William Gurikacha, Medadi Tindawesire, Silver Tugugu, Galasino Kinto, William Bataringaya, James Kinyingi Muwanga, John Fisher Iga, John Bosco Kiwanuka, Lwanga Kimbugwe Kaloli, Leo Mwebaze, Joseph Andabati, Ronald Owino

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at reports that the 28 people named above are to be executed, between 28 and 30 April 1999. These would be the first executions in Uganda since 1996.

The local press reported that the Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy (PMC) has confirmed the death sentences after the prisoners lost appeals in the Supreme Court. This committee advises the Ugandan President, Yoweri Museveni, on which death sentence he should commute or confirm. The President still has the option to override the Committee, exercise executive clemency and commute the sentences. Twenty-six of those to be hanged have been convicted of murder and two of aggravated robbery.

Haji Musa Ssebirumbi was found guilty of murder in 1989, and lost his appeal in June 1992. He has been on death row since then. Details of the others' cases are not known, but it is believed that many of them were convicted of murder over 10 years ago.

Press reports say that 13 other prisoners have had their death sentences commuted to life imprisonment by the PMC. It is not known whether the PMC will review more cases in the near future, as their deliberations are officially confidential.

Amnesty International is universally opposed to the death penalty, and is deeply concerned by the possibility of the resumption of executions in Uganda. More than 1000 prisoners are now under sentence of death, not all of whom have completed the appeals process.

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

- expressing concern that Uganda may be about to resume executions;
- expressing sympathy for the victims of violent crime and their families, but stating opposition to the use of the death penalty in all cases, on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- appealing for President Yoweri Museveni to exercise clemency and to commute these death sentences, **and all other death sentences that come before him;**
- appealing for a public moratorium on executions in Uganda and urging the authorities to consider abolishing capital punishment completely;
- **urging that the Advisory Committee on the Prerogative of Mercy commutes all death sentence it reviews.**

APPEALS TO:

President Yoweri K Museveni
Office of the President
Parliament Buildings
PO Box 7168
Kampala
Uganda

Faxes: + 256 41 25 79 86 or 25 53 28 or 23 54 62

Telegrams: President Museveni, Parliament Buildings, Kampala, Uganda

Salutation: Dear President Museveni

Mr Jehoash Mayanja Nkangi
Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs
Ministry of Justice
and Constitutional Affairs
PO BOX 7183
Kampala
Uganda

Faxes: +256 41 25 48 29

Telegrams: Justice Minister Nkangi, Kampala, Uganda

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Bart Katureebe
Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
and Constitutional Affairs
PO BOX 7183
Kampala
Uganda

Faxes: +256 41 25 48 29

Telegrams: Attorney General Katureebe, Kampala, Uganda

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Uganda accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 May 1999