

EXTRA 37/99

Prisoners of Conscience / Fear of Torture or ill-treatment

10 March 1999

ZAMBIA	Amos Malupenga]	
	Goodson Machona]	Journalists with the independent
	Brighton Phiri]	Post newspaper
	Joe Kaunda]	
	Kelvin Shimo]	
	Lubasi Katundu]	

Three journalists from the independent *Post* newspaper, Amos Malupenga, Goodson Machona and Brighton Phiri, have been detained incommunicado in an unknown place of detention since they were arrested on 9 and 10 March 1999. Amnesty International is concerned they are at risk of being tortured or ill-treated.

Three other journalists from the paper were also arrested at the same time but have been able to see a lawyer and are apparently in satisfactory health. Lubasi Katundu and Kelvin Shimo are known to be detained at Woodlands Police Station in the capital, Lusaka, and Joe Kaunda is at Chilanga Police Station outside Lusaka. None have been charged.

The journalists were arrested in connection with a lead article they wrote entitled "Angola Worries Zambia Army, ZAF" concerning the low military capabilities and unprepared state of the Zambian army in the face of a possible military threat from Angola.

On 9 March, National Assembly Deputy Speaker Simon Mwila reportedly expressed concern about the article, saying it was deeply unpatriotic about the security of the country, and asked Defence Minister Chitalu Sampa to take appropriate action against the *Post*. Another member of parliament also felt that such a detailed article concerning the country's weaponry had "undressed us as a country".

Human rights and journalists' organizations immediately condemned the arrests, and the Zambia Independent Media Association (ZIMA) said, "the arrest of the entire newsroom staff is aimed at crippling the operations of the newspaper".

Amnesty International believes the men are prisoners of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the past several weeks, tensions between Angola and Zambia have been high over Angola's allegations that Zambian government ministers were involved in the smuggling of arms to the armed political opposition in Angola, *União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola* (UNITA), National Union of the Total Independence of Angola.

In February, a series of bombs went off in Lusaka, including one at the Angolan embassy. Four other bombs planted on two pylons feeding electricity to Lusaka were defused by bomb disposal experts. No group has claimed responsibility.

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

- expressing fears for the safety in detention of Amos Malupenga, Goodson Machona and Brighton Phiri;
- seeking assurances that they will not be tortured or ill-treated while in custody and have full access to legal representatives, family and medical care;
- urging that all six Post journalists be immediately and unconditionally released from custody as prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their legitimate activities as journalists;
- urging the Zambian authorities to publicly reaffirm their opposition to torture under any circumstances.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency President Frederick Chiluba
President of the Republic of Zambia
PO Box 30208, Lusaka, Zambia

Telegrams: President, Lusaka, Zambia
Faxes: + 260-1-221939
E-mails: state@zamnet.zm or mfalus@zamnet.zm
Salutation: Your Excellency

Defence Minister Chitalu Sampa
Ministry of Defence
Bag RW 17X
Lusaka, Zambia

Telegrams: Defence Minister, Lusaka, Zambia
Faxes: + 260-1-254670
Salutation: Dear Minister

Home Affairs Minister Chattel Columbia
Ministry of Home Affairs
PO Box 50997
Lusaka, Zambia

Telegrams: Home Affairs Minister, Lusaka, Zambia
Faxes: + 260-1-254336
Salutation: Dear Minister

The Inspector General of Police
Mr Francis Ndhlovu
P.O. Box 50103
Lusaka

Telegrams: Police Inspector General, Lusaka, Zambia
Faxes: + 260-1-253537
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

COPIES TO:

The Post newspaper
Private Bag E352, Lusaka, Zambia
Faxes: + 260 1 225 452
E-mails: post@zamnet.zm
Web: http://www.zamnet.zm

Zambia Independent Media Association (ZIMA),
P.O. Box 32295
Lusaka, Zambia.

Faxes: + 260-1-237881

and to diplomatic representatives of Zambia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 April 1999.