

UA 280/99

Prison Conditions / Health concern 26 October 1999

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Emilio Ribas Esada
Gregorio Bomuagasi
Milagrosa Cheba (f)
Alejandro Mbe Bita Rope
And approximately 80 others prisoners convicted in May
1998

Amnesty International is very concerned about the health of scores of Bubi prisoners, including the people named above, being held in appalling conditions in Malabo prison. Since their conviction in June 1998 they have been held in small, filthy cells. Conditions are compounded by the extremely hot, humid climate. Most prisoners are being denied medical treatment. Eleven have been held in incommunicado detention in Malabo prison since May 1998.

On 20 October 1999, a detainee in the prison, Digno Sepa Tobachi, "Elako", died as a result of torture and lack of medical care.

Other Bubi prisoners convicted in the May 1998 trial (see background information) are seriously ill. Emilio Ribas Esada is suffering from inflammation of the testicles and Gregorio Bomuagasi, whose jawbone was broken by police at the time of his arrest in January 1998, has received no treatment since then. Milagrosa Cheba, the only woman, has fallen sick on several occasions and been sent to hospital. She is now back in prison even though she is still ill.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In May 1998 more than 110 people accused of involvement in attacks on military barracks were tried by a military court. The court sentenced 15 people to death (including four in absentia), and some 70 people to prison terms ranging from six to 26 years. Many defendants, predominantly members of the Bubi ethnic group, appear to have been detained solely because of their ethnic origin. Many had been forced to make statements under torture.

An Amnesty International delegation attending the trial noticed that a number of defendants showed signs of torture. Since sentences were passed, several prisoners have fallen ill as a result of the harsh prison conditions. Most have been denied medical care. One prisoner, Martin Puye, aged 58, a leader of the *Movimiento para la Auto-determinación de la Isla de Bioko* (MAIB), Movement for the Self-determination of Bioko Island, died in hospital in July 1998, reportedly as a result of ill-treatment and lack of adequate medical care. Other prisoners are thought to have been denied hospital treatment.

Conditions in the prison are harsh, and other detainees and prisoners are also at risk.

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

- expressing concern about the prison conditions in which those sentenced in the May 1998 trial are being held;
- urging the authorities to provide all prisoners with enough food and water and adequate medical treatment, especially in the cases mentioned

above;

- calling for the practice of incommunicado detention to be ended immediately;
- calling on the authorities to grant prisoners and detainees in Malabo prison immediate access to international humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross;
- expressing concern and calling for an independent and impartial enquiry into the death in Malabo prison, on 20 October, of Digno Sepa Tobachi "Elako", who had been tortured and who died as a result of a lack of medical care;
- calling for an independent and impartial enquiry into reports that detainees were tortured in connection with the attacks on military barracks in January 1998, and, if verified, calling for those responsible to be brought to justice in accordance with international standards for fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo

Presidente de la República
Gabinete del Presidente de la República
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telegrams: Presidente Obiang, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Faxes: + 240 9 3313

Salutation: Excelencia / Your Excellency

Prime Minister Serafín Seriche Dougan

Primer Ministro
Gabinete del Primer Ministro
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telegrams: Primer Ministro Seriche Dougan, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Sr. Don / Dear Prime Minister

Secretary of State for Security, Colonel Manuel Nguema Mba

Secretario de Estado para la Seguridad Nacional
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telegrams: Colonel Manuel Nguema Mba, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Sr. Don / Dear Secretary of State

COPIES TO:

Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs

Miguel Oyono Ndong Mifumu

Vice-Primer Ministro y Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores
Equatorial Guinea

and to diplomatic representatives of Equatorial Guinea accredited to your country.

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