

PUBLIC

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Torture and ill-treatment/Incommunicado detention

19 March 2003

GUINEA-BISSAU

Fode Mandjam (m), military officer, rank not known
Queita Mané (m), military officer, rank not known
Serifo Baldé (m), army Lieutenant
Almane Alam Camará (m), army Major
Mamadú Turé (m), military officer, rank not known
Arafam Mané (m), military officer, rank not known
Deceased: Mussá Cassamá (m), army Second Lieutenant

Those named above were arrested in early November 2002. They are being held in incommunicado detention without charge, at Mansoa Army barracks north of the capital Bissau and at Cumeré Army barracks south of the capital. They have reportedly been tortured and at least one, Second Lieutenant Mussá Cassamá, has died in detention.

The soldiers have reportedly been accused of plotting to overthrow the government of President Kumba Ialá and have been denied access to their families, lawyers, human rights organizations and medical treatment. They have reportedly been tortured and ill-treated on several occasions. Almane Alam Camará has had his beard burnt and the men have reportedly been beaten whilst bound at the arms and legs. Serifo Baldé is in a coma at the air base military hospital, as a result of being tortured.

Mussá Cassamá died on 9 March 2003, apparently as a result of being tortured. His family collected his body from the air base military hospital. An autopsy to determine the precise cause of his death was not carried out. His body, however, had markings around his ankles and left shoulder, which suggest that he was tortured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since late 2000, hundreds of military officers who had criticised President Kumba Ialá have been subjected to persecution and arrest. They have often been accused of plotting to overthrow the government, though in all instances the authorities have failed to substantiate their accusations.

Those named above were previously imprisoned as part of a group of about 120 military officers arrested in November 2000. They were accused of attempting to overthrow the government and were held in appalling conditions, sometimes in incommunicado detention, without charge until their release on bail in May and June 2001. All the accused, except Almane Alam Camará and eight others had the charges against them dropped. They were tried in June and July 2002 and Almane Alam Camará received a three-year suspended prison sentence. During their trial, no evidence was presented in court to substantiate the charges against them.

Almane Alam Camará and some 40 soldiers, was re-arrested in December 2001 while free on bail. He was once again accused of attempting to overthrow the government and was held incommunicado until his release without charge, as a result of a presidential pardon in June 2002.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Portuguese or your own language:

- expressing concern at the reports that the soldiers named above have been tortured whilst being held in army barracks;
- seeking assurances that they will not be subjected to further torture and that they will be treated humanely;
- expressing concern at their prolonged incommunicado detention and urging that they are granted immediate access to their families, lawyers and medical treatment should they require it;

- calling for them to be immediately and unconditionally released unless they are promptly charged with a recognisably criminal offence;
- expressing concern for the death of Mussá Cassamá in detention, which was apparently caused as a result of torture;
- calling for an investigation into the death of Mussá Cassamá and into the reported torture of all the detainees;
- calling for the perpetrators to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO: *(Please note that it may be difficult to get through to fax numbers in Guinea-Bissau. Please keep trying)*

President of Guinea Bissau

Sua Excelência Kumba Ialá
 Presidente da República
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 República da Guiné-Bissau

Fax: + 245 201 404 (or via Prime Minister's office + 245 206 205 / 206)

Salutations: Excelência / Your Excellency

Procurator General

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Salutations: Excelência / Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Sua Excelência
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 Ministério da Justiça
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Salutations: Excelência / Your Excellency

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Guinea-Bissau accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 April 2003.