

17 April 2000

Further information on UA 86/00 (AFR 60/01/00, 14 April 2000) - Cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment / Prisoners of conscience

BURKINA FASO Halidou Ouédraogo, President, Mouvement burkinabè des droits de l'homme et des peuples
Tolé Sagnon, trade unionist,
Norbert Tiendrébéogo, leader of opposition political party
Me Bénéwendé Sankara, lawyer
Dr Pierre Bidima
Etienne Traoré, university teacher

All six members of the *Collectif d'organisations démocratiques de masse et de partis politiques* were released late on 15 April 2000 without charge.

They had all been subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment by having their heads shaved while held by the *Direction de la compagnie d'intervention rapide* (DCIR), the police rapid deployment force. Halidou Ouédraogo, president of the *Collectif*, has described how he was held at gun point while his head was shaved.

The six men appeared to have been arrested solely because of their legitimate activities in calling for an end to impunity for human rights violations. Members of the *Collectif* have been repeatedly harassed, intimidated, arrested and detained since the *Collectif* was formed following the murder of prominent journalist Norbert Zongo and three others in December 1998. No one has yet been brought to justice for the murders.

Amnesty International continues to campaign for those responsible for Norbert Zongo's murder to be brought to justice and for human rights defenders to be protected from harassment, arrest and detention. In the meantime, no further action by the Urgent Action Network is required. Many thanks to all who sent appeals on their behalf.