

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 158/06 (AFR 19/003/2006, 05 June 2006) Fear of torture of ill-treatment/
possible death penalty

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC **Claude Yabanda (m), opposition politician**

Amnesty International has learnt that opposition politician Claude Yabanda was released on 11 November 2006. He has now joined family members living in France.

Claude Yabanda, a senior member of the socialist opposition political party *Front Patriotique pour le Progrès* (FPP), the Patriotic Front for Progress, was arrested on 29 April 2006. The authorities accused him of collaborating with armed groups trying to overthrow the government of President François Bozizé, and charged him with the capital offence of endangering the internal security of the state (*atteinte à la surêté intérieure de l'Etat*).

In early November, Claude Yabanda was approached by the Central African Republic's High Commissioner for Human Rights (*Haut Commissaire aux droits de l'homme*) and advised to apply to the Procurator General (*Procureur général*) for permission to be released for two months. He initially rejected the advice because the charges against him still stood, and it was not clear if he would still be tried. Claude Yabanda's lawyer then met with the *Procureur general*, who convinced him to apply for release, on the grounds that Claude Yabanda could be at risk from other detainees if he remained in custody. He did not clarify why it was thought that Claude Yabanda may be at risk. On his release, his passport was returned to him and he was authorised to fly out of the Central African Republic. He may face rearrest if he returns, as the charges against him have not been dropped. It appears that the authorities, embarrassed by the international attention on Claude Yabanda, had decided to 'persuade' him to leave the country.

Claude Yabanda has said that he is grateful to Amnesty International members for their support and action on his behalf.

No further action is requested. Many thanks to those who sent appeals.