

5 January 2000

Further information on EXTRA 168/99 (AFR 17/12/99, 26 November 1999) and follow-up (AFR 17/13/99, 3 December 1999) - Fear of "disappearance" / Extrajudicial execution

CAMEROON Maurice Tchambou

Amnesty International has renewed fears for the safety of human rights defender Maurice Tchambou, who has again been placed in incommunicado detention by the security forces of the *brigade anti-gang*.

The *brigade anti-gang*, a joint military and gendarmerie unit deployed since March 1998 to combat a long-standing problem of armed robbery in the north of the country, has been responsible for the extrajudicial execution of several hundred suspected armed robbers (see *Cameroon: Extrajudicial executions in North and Far-North Provinces*, AI Index: AFR 17/16/98, December 1998).

Maurice Tchambou is believed to have been arrested solely because of his association with the non-governmental human rights organization, the *Mouvement pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés* (MDDHL), Movement for the Defence of Human Rights and Liberties, and his activities in defence of human rights. Members of the MDDHL have been threatened and harassed as a result of their investigation and exposure of killings by the *brigade anti-gang*.

Under Cameroon law, Maurice Tchambou should have been referred to a judicial authority, to be either charged or released, within 72 hours of his arrest. Up to now he has not been charged with any offence and the reason for his arrest remains unclear.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Maurice Tchambou was arrested on 21 November 1999 by the gendarmerie - the paramilitary police - in Maroua, Far-North Province. Amnesty International became concerned for his safety when he was transferred the same day to the custody of the *brigade anti-gang* and held incommunicado. He was returned to the custody of the gendarmerie, where he had been allowed to receive visits again, for about a week to 10 days, before his latest transfer to the *brigade anti-gang*. His return to detention by the *brigade anti-gang* coincided with a visit to London, United Kingdom, of Abdoulaye Math, the president of the MDDHL, and a colleague, Semdi Soulaye, during the second week of December 1999.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/E-mails/faxes/express/airmail letters in French, English or your own language:

- expressing concern about reports that Maurice Tchambou, a member of the *Mouvement pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés* (MDDHL), Movement for the Defence of Human Rights and Liberties, is again being held incommunicado by forces of the *brigade anti-gang* in Maroua, Far-North Province;
- urging that his safety be guaranteed while in detention and that he be allowed visits from members of his family, a lawyer and a doctor;
- urging his immediate and unconditional release if, as it appears, he has been arrested solely because of his association with the MDDHL and his activities in defence of human rights.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of State for Defence

M. Amadou Ali

Ministre d'Etat délégué à la Présidence chargé de la Défense

Palais de la Présidence

1000 Yaoundé

République du Cameroun

Telegrams:Ministre d'Etat Défense, Présidence, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Faxes: + 237 20 33 06

E-mails:celcom@camnet.cm

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre d'Etat / Dear Minister of State

Head of National Security

M. Luc René Bell

Délégué général à la Sûreté nationale

Sûreté nationale

1000 Yaoundé

République du Cameroon

Telegrams:M. Bell, Sûreté nationale, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Faxes:c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs + 237 20 11 33 (you may get a recorded message. If this happens, please try later)

Salutation:Monsieur le Délégué général / Dear Mr Bell

Minister of Justice

M. Laurent Esso

Ministre de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux

Ministère de la Justice

1000 Yaoundé

République du Cameroon

Telegrams:Ministre Justice, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Faxes:+ 237 22 01 97

E-mails:celcom@camnet.cm

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Le Messenger (newspaper)

Faxes:+ 237 42 02 14

Cameroon Tribune (newspaper)

Faxes:+ 237 30 43 62

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 February 2000.