

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of torture/illtreatment/legal concern

13 February 1992

CAMEROON: Dr Zama Kimbi Ndefru, head of the Cameroon Anglophone  
Movement (CAM)  
Stephen Ndi, aged in his 70s, CAM Chairman, Bamenda  
section  
Blaise Berinyuy, CAM Secretary, Bamenda section  
Gilbert Azeh, student  
and some 40 others

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More than 40 people, and possibly over 100, were arrested in Bamenda, the capital of North West Province, following a peaceful demonstration on 11 February 1992. Detainees are reported to have been severely beaten and deprived of food and water. Amnesty International is calling on the government to ensure their physical safety and to release them immediately if they are not to be charged with any recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly before the judicial authorities.

Peaceful demonstrations and rallies were held throughout western Cameroon on 11 February 1992 to mark the anniversary of the 1961 plebiscite in which the former British-administered territory of Southern Cameroons voted to join the Republic of Cameroon, newly independent from French rule. The demonstrators were calling for more autonomy for English-speaking western Cameroon and a return to the federal system abolished in 1972.

Among those arrested during and following the demonstration in Bamenda were opposition leaders, students and young teenagers, some of them arrested in outlying areas of Bamenda.

The detainees were taken to the headquarters of the Gendarmerie in Bamenda, where many were reported to have been severely beaten. Eye-witnesses reported seeing two people, including Dr Zama Kimbi Ndefru, head of the new opposition group, the Cameroon Anglophone Movement (CAM), being kicked and beaten with clubs and rifle butts by some 40 gendarmes.

The detainees are being held incommunicado: their families have been refused permission to see them or even to deliver food for them. They have apparently been stripped and denied all food and water. Although a few are thought to have been released without charge, most are apparently still held.

Some young people were apparently arrested because they were selling magazines with pictures on the covers of John Fru Ndi, Chairman of the opposition Social Democratic Front (SDF), and of the maimed victim of a grenade attack by the security forces in October 1991. Throughout 1991 there were widespread arrests and reports of torture and ill-treatment of detainees, and more than 50 people were killed by the security forces during demonstrations and disturbances. In Bamenda, following weeks of peaceful demonstrations, at least two people were shot dead when a political rally scheduled to take place on 2 October 1991 was banned by the authorities and the security forces opened fire with live ammunition and grenades on demonstrators who were trying to disperse. At least 50 people were reported to have been severely injured, some 10 losing hands or limbs. One, Joe Awah, lost a hand when a grenade was thrown by the security forces at John Fru Ndi. Others were apparently forced to carry grenades at gunpoint. No inquiry is known to have been held into these

killings, nor were any measures known to have been taken by the authorities subsequently to prevent or limit the number of deaths and injuries caused by the security forces.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the widespread arrests following a demonstration in Bamenda on 11 February 1992, apparently in contradiction of the basic human right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association (under Article 20 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights);

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- expressing concern at reports that many of the detainees were subsequently tortured or ill-treated, and have been denied food and water since their arrest; appealing for them to be safeguarded from ill-treatment and to be provided with appropriate food, drink and medical treatment;

- expressing concern at reports that the detainees have been denied visits and food from their families, and urging that they be allowed full access to legal representatives, families and doctors of their choice;

- calling for the immediate release of the detainees unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly before the judicial authorities.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) President:

Son Excellence Monsieur Paul Biya  
Président de la République  
Palais de l'Unité  
Yaoundé, Cameroon

**Monsieur le Président de la République /  
Dear President**

**Telegrams: President Biya, Yaounde, Cameroon**

**Faxes: 237 221699**

**Telexes: 8207 PRESID KN (Secretariat général)  
8595 PRESID B KN (Cabinet civil)**

2) Minister of Internal Affairs:

M. Gilbert Andzé Tsoungui  
Ministre de l'Administration territoriale  
Ministère de l'Administration territoriale  
1000 Yaoundé 4, Cameroon

**Monsieur le Ministre /  
Dear Minister**

**Telegrams: Ministre Tsoungui, Yaounde, Cameroon**

**Telexes: 8503 MINAT KN; 8268 MINAT KN**

3) Delegate-General of National Security:

M. Jean Fochivé  
Délégué-général  
Sûreté nationale  
Yaoundé, Cameroon

**Monsieur le Délégué-général /  
Dear Sir**

**Telegrams: Delegate-general Surete national Fochive, Yaounde, Cameroon**

**Telexes: 8383 CNER KN**

4) Governor of North West Province:

Mr John Ebong Ngolle  
Governor of North West Province  
Governor's Office

**Dear Governor**

5000 Bamenda, Cameroon

**Telegrams: Governor Ngolle, Bamenda, Cameroon**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Minister of Foreign Affairs:

M. Jacques-Roger Booh Booh

Ministre des Affaires étrangères

Ministère des Affaires étrangères

1000 Yaoundé 4, Cameroon

and the following newspapers:

Postwatch, PO Box 235, Bamenda, Cameroon

Cameroon Post, BP 1981, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Le Messager, BP 5925, Douala, Cameroon

Challenge Hebdo, BP 13088, Douala, Cameroon

La Nouvelle Expression, BP 5646, Douala, Cameroon

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon in your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 27 March 1992.