

PUBLIC

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"Disappearance"/Fear of extrajudicial execution

8 July 1999

REPUBLIC OF CONGO Ley Pemba, student

David Dako Ketomono, unemployed, aged 30

Joseph Ebali, soldier

Ley Pemba, David Dako Ketomono and Joseph Ebali were arrested by the Congolese security forces in Brazzaville in May 1999 and have since "disappeared". Amnesty International fears that they are illegally held incommunicado in a detention centre and are at risk of extrajudicial execution.

The three men were arrested at the church of the *Communauté Chrétienne Evangélique*, Evangelical Christian Community, in the Mougali district of Brazzaville, in one of a series of night-time raids on churches in which dozens were arrested. Many people had sought refuge in Mougali from the armed conflict that had been taking place in southern Brazzaville since late 1998.

They were reportedly arrested on suspicion of being members of the *Ninjas*, a Congolese armed opposition group led by former Prime Minister Bernard Kolelas. Congolese security forces have carried out extrajudicial executions of many other suspected members of armed opposition groups. During a 1998 visit to Brazzaville, Amnesty International representatives learned that detainees were sometimes taken from police detention centres and extrajudicially executed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

President Denis Sassou Nguesso returned to power in a coup d'état in October 1997, ousting President Pascal Lissouba, who had defeated him in an election in 1992. Since then there has been continuous fighting between the security forces and rival militias, and all sides have committed killings, torture and other human rights abuses against civilians, with almost complete impunity.

Hundreds of unarmed civilians and captured combatants loyal to former President Lissouba have been extrajudicially executed by government forces and members of armed groups loyal to President Nguesso. Several dozen suspected government opponents, many of whom appear to be prisoners of conscience, have been detained without charge or trial. Cases of torture, ill-treatment and "disappearance" by government forces have also been reported.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send faxes/express/airmail letters in French or your own language:

- expressing deep concern at the "disappearance" of Ley Pemba, David Dako Ketomono and Joseph Ebali;
- calling on the Congolese authorities to carry out prompt and thorough investigations to find out where they are being detained;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release, unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- urging the Congolese government to publicly state its total opposition to extrajudicial executions and "disappearances", and to make clear to all members of the security forces that extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" will not be tolerated under any circumstances, and that orders to commit human rights violations should be disobeyed.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Son Excellence M. Denis SASSOU Nguesso
Président de la République
BP 2006, Brazzaville
République du Congo

Fax: + 242 81 32 55

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President

Minister of Justice

Mâitre Jean-Martin MBEMBA
Ministre de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
Brazzaville

République du Congo

Fax: + 242 61 41 67

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Director General of the Police

Colonel Jean-François NDENGUÉ
Directeur Général de la Police Nationale
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Brazzaville

République du Congo

Salutation: Monsieur le Directeur Général

General Prosecutor of the Supreme Court

Monsieur Gabriel B. ENTCHA-EBIA
Procureur général près la Cour suprême de Justice
BP 82, Palais de Justice
Brazzaville

République du Congo

Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur Général

COPIES TO:

La Semaine Africaine, BP 2080, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo

and to diplomatic representatives of the Republic of Congo accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 August 1999.