

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture / Fear of torture

28 February 1995

EQUATORIAL GUINEA Severo Moto Nsá, President of *Partido del Progreso de Guinea Ecuatorial* (PPGE)

Tomás Eló, leading member of PPGE

José Ndong Masuela, leading member of PPGE

Agapito Ona, Secretary General of PPGE

Former Lt. Col. Pedro Esono Masié, retired

Commander Leoncio Miká

and an undetermined number of military officers

Pablo Ndong Nsema, leading member of PPGE

Manuel Ndong Asayong, leading member of PPGE

Indalecio Abuy, human rights activist

Several leading members of one of the main opposition political parties in Equatorial Guinea and an unspecified number of military officers have been arrested, amid allegations of a plot to overthrow the government. At least three people have been tortured and there are fears that further arrests and torture may occur amid rising political tension.

Tomás Eló, a leading member of the *Partido del Progreso de Guinea Ecuatorial* (PPGE), Equatorial Guinean Progress Party, was arrested on 24 January 1995 in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea on Bioko Island. He was taken to the police station, where he was reportedly tortured, and then transferred to prison where he remains. He was accused of trying to bribe a police officer to obtain information about President Obiang Nguema.

Severo Moto, the President of the PPGE, was placed under house arrest following the arrest of Tomás Eló. He has been accused of corruption and insulting the Head of State. At first, members of his party were allowed to stay with him. However, on 26 February they were ordered out of the premises. The security officers guarding Severo Moto have apparently been heard threatening him.

Agapito Ona Nguema, Secretary General of the PPGE, was arrested on 17 February in Malabo. His whereabouts remained unknown until 26 February when the authorities presented him to journalists and foreign diplomats at the main police station in Bata, the capital of the mainland region of Río Muni. Agapito Ona Nguema publicly implicated Severo Moto, as well as Spain and the United States of America, in a plot to overthrow President Obiang Nguema. No evidence of such a plot was produced. According to witnesses, there were no visible signs that Agapito Ona Nguema had been tortured.

José Ndong Masuela, another leading PPGE member, and two others, were arrested at gunpoint in the night of 26 February in Malabo. The three were reportedly taken to some unused barracks where they were tortured before being taken to the police station where they are currently being held.

Several military officers have been arrested in Malabo and Bata in the past week in connection with the alleged attempt to overthrow the government. They include former Lieutenant-Colonel Pedro Esono Masié and the director of the military academy in Bata, Commander Leoncio Miká. Both are said to be detained in Bata but the exact place of their detention is not known. Leoncio Miká is related to the Vice-president of the PPGE. Other military officers are

apparently in detention in barracks in Malabo and Bata.

Pablo Ndong Nsema and Manuel Ndong Asayong, also leaders of the PPGE, went into hiding on 27 February after they learned that the police were looking for them. Indalecio Abuy, a human rights activist from Bata, went into hiding on his return from Spain where he had been attending a seminar organized by the Reformed Church. Apparently, the authorities are seeking him in connection with his trip. Indalecio Abuy had previously been arrested in October 1994 (see UA 371/94, AFR 24/11/94, 7 October 1994).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since the adoption of a multi-party system in Equatorial Guinea in 1992 members of opposition political parties have faced harassment and repeated short-term arrests and torture or ill-treatment. The authorities have often accused opposition political parties of plotting, together with soldiers, to overthrow the government but have never presented evidence to prove the existences of such plots. The PPGE is one of the three main opposition political parties in Equatorial Guinea. In the past, its leaders have been often accused of plotting to overthrow the government. The president of the party, Severo Moto, has been particularly persecuted.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:

- expressing concern at reports of the torture of Tomás Eló, Jose Ndong Masuela and at least two other people and asking that these allegations be thoroughly investigated and the results made public;
- expressing concern that Severo Moto is being denied visits and urging that he and all detainees are granted immediate access to their relatives, medical personnel and lawyers;
- seeking assurances that all detainees are being humanely treated in accordance with international standards;
- requesting information about the precise charges against all detainees, their whereabouts and their state of health.

APPEALS TO

1) President

General de Brigada Teodoro Obiang Nguema
 Presidente de la Republica
 Gabinete del Presidente
 Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Presidente Obiang Nguema, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Faxes: + 240 9 3313

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

2) Prime Minister

Silvestre Siale Bileka
 Primer Ministro
 Gabinete del Primer Ministro
 Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Primer Ministro Siale Bileka, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/Dear Prime Minister

3) Minister of Justice

Francisco Javier Ndongo Mbengono
Ministro de Justicia y Culto
Ministerio de Justicia y Culto
Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia Ndongo Mbengono, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/Dear Minister

4) Minister of Foreign Affairs

Miguel Oyono Ndong Mifumu
Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores
Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores, Ndongo Mifumu, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Faxes: + 240 9 2320

Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Equatorial Guinea accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office if sending appeals after 20 April 1995.