

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 84/05 (AFR 24/007/2005, 12 April 2005) - Denial of food/medical concern/torture

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

About 70 inmates at Black Beach prison

Amnesty International was able to confirm on 7 June that the food situation at Black Beach prison has improved since this UA was issued; however, there is no information on whether the prisoners have received any medical treatment. Six Armenian prisoners have been pardoned, and are expected to leave the country on 9 June.

The authorities responded to this urgent action and the accompanying press release by telling journalists and saying on national radio that, among other things, Amnesty's version of events was all lies, that they knew of their obligations and provided food for the prisoners. The Minister of Justice claimed that the trouble at the prison, in the capital, Malabo, had started when the foreign prisoners asked for apples and melon for dessert.

The prisoners' diet has improved only slightly, and it is still not adequate. However, since 20 April the prison authorities have resumed giving them a daily ration of rice. They have also received tomato paste, cooking oil, salt and sugar: they do their own cooking. The South African and Armenian prisoners, and possibly others, were promised meat or fish twice a week. However, they have not always received it.

The South African prisoners are receiving monthly visits from South African consular staff. However, their lawyer is still not allowed to meet them, and they are still kept in handcuffs and leg-irons 24 hours a day.

Black Beach prison remains out of bounds for all prisoners' families. Relatives continue to take food to the prison and hand it over to the soldiers on duty to take it to the prisoners.

President Obiang Nguema pardoned the six Armenian nationals "for humanitarian reasons", on the occasion of his birthday on 5 June. They are expected to fly out of Equatorial Guinea on 9 June.

No further action is requested from the UA network. Amnesty International will continue to work on this case through the RAN and other longer-term forms of action. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.