

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 24/13/93

Distr: UA/SC

UA 300/93

Arbitrary arrest/Torture

1 September 1993

EQUATORIAL GUINEA: Francisco Engono Micué
 José Ramón Obama

Amnesty International has learned with concern of the arrest and torture on 31 August 1993 of Francisco Engono Micué and José Ramón Obama. They were reportedly arrested because of their family ties with Father José Luis Engono, a Roman Catholic priest and a known government critic who is believed to have gone into hiding to evade arrest. The two men are being held incommunicado at the police station in Bata, capital of the continental province of Rio Muni. Amnesty International is concerned for their physical safety in view of recent deaths in custody as a result of torture both in Malabo, the capital on Bioko Island, and in Rio Muni.

Francisco Engono Micué, a 51-year old official in the traffic division of the Bata municipal council, is the father of José Luis Engono. José Ramón Obama is Francisco Engono Micué's cousin. They were arrested by members of the security police, popularly known as "ninjas", who beat them on arrest and in the car on the way to the police headquarters in Bata.

Three months ago, one of the most senior officials in Bata summoned Francisco Engono Micué and threatened that unless Father José Luis Engono stopped criticizing the government "something" might happen to him.

Father José Luis Engono, parish priest of Mbini in Rio Muni, left his home on Sunday 29 August 1993. He is believed to have been told that he was about to be arrested. He is known to have received several threats against his physical safety from security personnel and very senior government officials.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since December 1991, when a multi-party political system was introduced in Equatorial Guinea, members of opposition parties have faced continuous harassment and repeated short-term arrests. Persecution of political opponents increased sharply following the announcement of the first multi-party elections in Equatorial Guinea set, initially, for 12 September 1993 and now postponed until 21 November 1993. Opposition parties said they would boycott elections on the grounds that the electoral law is seriously flawed. This coincided with the removal of a large contingent of the Moroccan troops which had been seconded to Equatorial Guinea under the terms of a bi-lateral agreement with the Kingdom of Morocco.

Many of those arrested recently have been severely tortured. At least two people died in custody in Malabo in August 1993 after being severely tortured and two others were extrajudicially executed in Annobon island. There have been other recent reports of deaths in custody elsewhere in the country. A number

of government opponents, fearing arrest, have gone into hiding.

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

- expressing concern that Francisco Engono Micué and José Ramón Obama were arbitrarily arrested on 31 August 1993;
- expressing concern at reports that they were severely ill-treated when they were arrested and that they are at risk of being subjected to further ill-treatment or torture;
- urging that they immediately be allowed to receive visits from their relatives and medical personnel;
- saying that Amnesty International believes that they are prisoners of conscience detained solely because of their family relations with a government critic and should therefore be released immediately and unconditionally.

APPEALS TO

1) President

Coronel Obiang Nguema Mbasogo
Presidente de la República
Ministro de Defensa Nacional
Gabinete del Presidente de la República,
Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Presidente Obiang Nguema, Malabo, República de 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, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Primer Ministro Siale Bileka, Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/Dear Prime Minister

3) Minister of Justice and Religion

Mariano Nsué Nguema
Ministro de Justicia y Culto
Ministerio de Justicia y Culto
Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia Nsué Nguema Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/Dear Minister

4) Foreign Minister

Benjamín Mba Ekua Mikó

Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores & Francofonía

Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores

Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

**Telegrams: Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores Mba Ekua, Malabo, República de
Guinea Ecuatorial**

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Faxes: + 240-9 2320

Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 13 October 1993.