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EQUATORIAL GUINEA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL WELCOMES PRISONERS'  
RELEASE

Amnesty International welcomes the release of 26 prisoners of conscience in Equatorial Guinea following an amnesty decreed by President Teodoro Obiang Nguema to mark the 16th anniversary of his accession to power.

Among those released on 3 August 1995 from Black Beach Prison in Malabo were several leading members of the *Partido del Progreso* (PP), Progress Party. They were convicted in April 1995 by a military court of endangering the security of the state, high treason or corruption and insulting the Head of State, then sentenced to prison terms ranging from six months to 30 years.

Fourteen other prisoners of conscience convicted in 1994 by a military court of endangering the security of the state were also released under the terms of the amnesty.

All the trials were unfair, according to Amnesty International. Most of the prisoners had reportedly been tortured in pre-trial detention. Scars were clearly visible when they appeared in court.

The human rights organization calls on the Equatorial Guinean authorities to thoroughly investigate the torture of the released prisoners and to bring those responsible to justice.

"We are pleased with the release of the prisoners because the real reason for their imprisonment was their non-violent opposition to the government," Amnesty International said.

The human rights organization also urges the government to release Weja Chicampo, as well as Aurelio Losoa and Enrique Boneke (both of whom are over 70 years old). They are reportedly imprisoned solely for belonging to the non-violent *Movimiento para la Autodeterminacion de la Isla de Bioko* (MAIB), Movement for the Self-determination of Bioko Island.

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