

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 24/013/2008

21 October 2008

UA 288/08

Enforced disappearance/ incommunicado detention/ fear of torture or ill-treatment

EQUATORIAL GUINEA **Cipriano Nguema Mba (m), former colonel in Equatorial Guinean army**

The whereabouts of former Equatorial Guinea army colonel Cipriano Nguema Mba have been unknown since he was illegally arrested in Cameroon. He is at risk of enforced disappearance, torture or ill-treatment and might be held incommunicado in Black Beach prison in the capital Malabo (Equatorial Guinea).

Cipriano Nguema Mba is recognized as a refugee by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and currently lives in Cameroon. On or around 8 October, he was arrested illegally by two Cameroonian police officers, and handed over to security personnel at the Equatorial Guinea embassy in the Cameroonian capital, Yaounde. He was then reportedly taken to Equatorial Guinea. According to some information received, he was taken to Black Beach prison in Malabo where he is being held incommunicado. The authorities in Equatorial Guinea have not confirmed his whereabouts, or even whether they are holding him, leading to fears that Cipriano Nguema Mba has been subjected to enforced disappearance.

Cipriano Nguema Mba is the former paymaster of the army of Equatorial Guinea. In October 2003 he was accused of plotting to overthrow the government and of absconding with money for soldiers' salaries. He fled the country and was tried in his absence at a secret military trial in February 2004, at which he was sentenced to 30 years in prison. Many members of his family and close associates were also tried in the same trial on the same charges and given long prison terms. Most of them had been tortured in pre-trial detention.

The Cameroonian authorities have denied any part in the illegal arrest of Cipriano Nguema Mba and have arrested the two police officers involved.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has previously received information about the abduction of Equatorial Guinean refugees in neighbouring countries by Equatorial Guinean security personnel, often in connivance with security personnel in those countries. In 2004, five Equatorial Guineans were arrested in Libreville, Gabon, and handed over to the Equatorial Guinean authorities. After being held incommunicado for two years, they were charged with undermining the security of the state and treason, and then subjected to an unfair trial and given up to 20 years prison sentences. In 2005, four Equatorial Guinean refugees living in Benin and Nigeria were arrested and abducted by Equatorial Guinea security personnel in connivance with Nigerian security personnel. They were tried in their absence (despite the fact that they were in the country), in September 2005 at an unfair trial and sentenced to long prison terms. One was released after a presidential pardon in June 2008. However, the other three continue to be held incommunicado in Black Beach prison.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:

To the Equatorial Guinea authorities, in Spanish or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of Cipriano Nguema Mba, whose whereabouts have not been confirmed by the Equatorial Guinean authorities, and who appears to be subject to enforced disappearance;
- calling on the authorities to publicly reveal the whereabouts of Cipriano Nguema Mba;
- calling for Cipriano Nguema Mba to be given immediate access to a lawyer, relatives and any necessary medical care;
- urging that he is held in conditions that conform to international law and standards for the treatment of prisoners, and not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;

- expressing concern at reports that he was illegally removed from Cameroon, and calling for an investigation into the alleged abduction, with the results made public and anyone found to be responsible brought to justice;
- urging the authorities to put an end to the practice of abducting Equatorial Guinean citizens from abroad.

APPEALS TO:

President

General Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo

Presidente de la República

Gabinete del Presidente de la República, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Fax: +240 09 3313/ 3334

Salutation: Excelencia/Your Excellency

Attorney General

Sr. Don José Oló Obono

Fiscal General de la República, Fiscalía General de la República, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Fax: +240 09 1338

Salutation: Sr Fiscal/ Dear Attorney General

Minister of National Security

Sr Don Manuel Nguema Mba

Ministro de Seguridad Nacional, Dirección General de Seguridad Nacional, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Fax: +240 09 8259

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

To the Cameroonian authorities, in French, English or your own language:

- asking the authorities to carry out an independent and impartial investigation into the alleged abduction of Cipriano Nguema Mba, to make the findings public and to bring those found to be responsible to justice;
- reminding the Cameroonian authorities of their obligations under the 1969 Organization of African Unity Refugee Convention and the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, not to forcibly return anyone to a country where they are at risk of torture.

Vice-Prime Minister / Minister of Justice

Monsieur Amadou Ali

Vice- Premier Ministre

Chargé de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux, L'Office du Premier Ministre, PO Box 1000, Yaounde, Cameroon

Fax: + 237 2223 00 05

Salutation: Dear Vice-Prime Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Monsieur Laurent Easo

Ministre d'Etat chargé des Relations Extérieures, Ministère des Relations Extérieures, Yaounde, Cameroon

Fax: +237 2220 1133

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Pastor Micha Ondo Bile

Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación Internacional

Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación Internacional, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

Fax: +240 09 3132/2320

and to diplomatic representatives of Equatorial Guinea and Cameroon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 December 2008.