

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of ill-treatment/legal concern

18 February 1993

MALAWI: Bakili Muluzi, Chairman of the United Democratic Front (UDF) and opposition activist

Amnesty International is concerned about the arrest on 15 February 1993 in Blantyre, Malawi, of Bakili Muluzi, an opposition activist and chairman of the opposition group, the United Democratic Front (UDF). He is currently being held without charge at Chichiri Prison in Blantyre. Bakili Muluzi was a former cabinet minister and secretary general of the ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP).

On 14 February 1993 during an MCP rally at Balaka in Malawi, Life-President Kamuzu Banda claimed that Bakili Muluzi had misappropriated MCP funds in the 1970s when he was the MCP secretary general and ordered his arrest from the platform from which he was speaking. This accusation of misappropriation of funds would appear to be an attempt to weaken the UDF during its campaign for the referendum on multi-party democracy, set for 14 June 1993, since the UDF has been attracting large rallies in some areas. On 14 February armed policemen searching for Bakili at his home were unable to find him and arrested his wife and other UDF officials, who were all released without charge later the same day.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Malawi is a one-party state and since the decision to hold a referendum on whether or not to retain a one-party state was announced on 31 December 1992 there has been a succession of short-term arrests of opposition activists. There are two *de facto* opposition parties - although opposition parties are illegal in Malawi - the Alliance for Democracy (AFORD) and the United Democratic Front (UDF). The UDF was formed in October 1992 to campaign inside Malawi for multi-party democracy by peaceful means.

A recommendation by the UN advisory team from the UN Department of Political Affairs, which went to Malawi in January 1993, that the referendum set for March be postponed, was accepted. However additional recommendations - that in order to ensure a fair and free referendum there should be no restrictions on freedom of opinion and association, political parties should be allowed to work openly, all political prisoners should be released and exiles should be able to return safely - have so far not been totally implemented. (See UA 39/93, AFR 36/14/93, 15 February 1993, UA 26/93, AFR 36/12/93, 3 February 1993 and follow-up 36/13/93, 9 February 1993.)

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

- expressing concern that Bakili Muluzi was arrested on 15 February 1993 and is being held without charge;
- requesting information on the reasons and legal basis for his arrest;

- appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of Bakili Muluzi as a prisoner of conscience imprisoned for his non-violent political activities;
- seeking assurances that he is being treated humanely in prison and urging that he be given regular access to his family and lawyer and medical treatment if needed.

Page 2 of UA 42/93

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency Life-President Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda
Office of the President
Private Bag 301
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Telegrams: Life-President Banda, Lilongwe, Malawi
Telexes: 44389 PRES MI or 44113 EXTERNAL MI
Faxes: + 265 731878

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Mr John Tembo
Minister of the State
Office of the President
Private Bag 301
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Telegrams: State Minister Tembo, Lilongwe, Malawi
Telexes: 44389 PRES MI or 44113 EXTERNAL MI
Faxes: + 265 731878

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr MacWilliam Lunguzi
Inspector-General of Police
Malawi Police Headquarters
Private Bag 305
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Telegrams: Inspector-General Police Lunguzi, Lilongwe, Malawi

Salutation: Dear Inspector-General

4) Mr Friday Makuta
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Private Bag 333
Lilongwe 3, Malawi
Telegrams: Justice Minister Makuta, Lilongwe, Malawi
Telexes: 44766 JUSTICE MI

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Officer-in-Command
Chichiri Prison

Box 30117
Blantyre 3, Malawi

United Democratic Front (UDF)
PO Box 5946
Limbe, Malawi

Alliance for Democracy (AFORD)
c/o PO Box 17764
Hillbrow 2038 Johannesburg
South Africa

Newspaper
The Editor
Daily Times
P/Bag 39
Blantyre, Malawi

and to diplomatic representatives of Malawi accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 April 1993.