

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 44/05/00

THIS IS A LIMITED ACTION. PLEASE RESTRICT APPEALS TO FIVE PER SECTION

EXTRA 40/00

Fear of ill-treatment 14 April

NIGERIA Pastor Monday Gbonabe]
Saturday Namon]
Sunday Namon]
Stephen Oomii] Arrested 11 April
Friday Tenalo]
Pastor Deebari Zortee]
Lucky Zorgbaa]

Ledum Mitee, lawyer, former prisoner of conscience and President of the Movement
for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)

Barinaadua Jungle Gbaraka, aged 18, shot dead by police

Amnesty International is concerned by reports that residents of K-Dere village in Ogoniland, southeast Nigeria, arrested during a police raid on their village on 11 April, have been ill-treated in detention.

The reports indicate that Pastor Deebari Zortee, of the Apostolic Church, was beaten following arrest, that some of those detained with him are in poor health and that others wounded by police at the time of arrest have been denied medical care in detention at police headquarters in Port Harcourt, capital of Rivers State.

Ledum Mitee, President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), the community organization formerly headed by the executed writer Ken Saro-Wiwa, was detained on 13 April. Police and local government officials have accused him of a range of offences, including arming a secret youth wing of MOSOP, incitement to violence, organizing an ambush of police officers, the destruction of police vehicles and the burning of homes in K-Dere. He is reportedly currently detained by the paramilitary Mobile Police.

According to the Rivers State authorities, police went to the village of K-Dere in the early hours of 11 April to quell inter-communal unrest between the inhabitants and those of a neighbouring village, and were ambushed by youths who seized and seriously injured eight officers, and burned police vehicles. The authorities have confirmed that one resident was killed by police, while police sources have also been quoted as reporting that five other people were killed.

According to MOSOP, however, the raid on K-Dere and arrests by armed Mobile Police were not provoked by any community unrest, and police shot dead Barinaadua Jungle Gbaraka, aged 18, when he tried to escape arrest. MOSOP said that after youths had injured police officers in retaliation, dozens of armed officers returned to the village, killed at least five people and burned down homes, including those of Ledum Mitee and two traditional rulers. Reports indicated that the police were accompanied by a senior local government official and associates who identified as targets those who had opposed a road-building project by a company contracted to the Shell oil company. The inhabitants of K-Dere have fled into the bush where two elderly people and a baby are reported to have died as a result of the harsh conditions.

Under the 1999 Constitution, the detainees should have been released if not brought before a court and charged within 24 hours of arrest. Detainees held in police cells in Nigeria have frequently been held in conditions so harsh as to amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and denied medical treatment. Six youths from K-Dere who were arrested on 23 March and detained for several days without charge by police in Port Harcourt after protests against the road-building project, were reportedly denied access to medical care.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ledum Mitee was one of six defendants acquitted of murder charges after the political trials of MOSOP supporters which resulted in the conviction and execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight Ogoni companions in 1995. Allegations that the security forces committed extrajudicial executions and instigated inter-communal violence in Ogoniland in the mid-1990s have not been the subject of official investigation.

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

- expressing concern at reports that police shot dead Barinaadua Jungle Gbaraka, aged 18, when he tried to escape arrest - and may have killed others - in a police raid on K-Dere, Gokana local government area, on 11 April 2000;
- appealing to the authorities to provide protection to the villagers in K-Dere against further attacks and house burnings which have forced them to flee into the bush with the result that two elderly residents and one baby have reportedly died;
- calling for a thorough and impartial investigation to establish who has been killed or injured, with a view to bringing to justice those responsible for human rights violations;
- expressing concern at reports that the detainees named above have not been charged or released within 24 hours as required under the Constitution, and that some are reported to have been ill-treated following their arrest;
- asking for clarification of the legal basis of their continued detention without charge and urging that they are safeguarded from ill-treatment, provided with necessary medical treatment and allowed full access to lawyers, families and doctors of their choice while in custody;
- urging that those detained be released promptly if they are not to be immediately charged and fairly tried.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Dr Peter Odili, State Governor, Government House
91000 Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Telegrams:Governor, Rivers State, Nigeria

Tel/fax: + 234 84 231323

Salutation:Your Excellency

Commissioner for Justice, c/o Government House
91000 Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

Telegrams:Commissioner Justice, Rivers State, Nigeria

Tel/fax: c/o State Governor +234 84 231323 (marked for attention Commissioner for Justice)

Salutation:Dear Commissioner

Sir Kieran Z. Dudari, Commissioner of Police
State Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (SIIB)
State Police Command Headquarters
Hospital Road, Port Harcourt, Nigeria

Telegrams:Commissioner Police, Rivers State, Nigeria
Faxes:+ 234 84 233249 (marked for attention Commissioner of Police)
Salutation:Dear Commissioner of Police

COPIES TO:

General (retired) David Jemibewon
Minister for Police Affairs, New Federal Secretariat Complex
Shehu Shagari Way, Central Area District
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

Faxes:c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs +234 9 523 0208 / 0394
or c/o President's Press Office + 234 9 523 2136
(marked for attention Minister of Police Affairs)

E-mails:president.obasanjo@nigeriagov.org
(marked for attention Minister of Police Affairs)

and to diplomatic representatives of NIGERIA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 15 May 2000.