

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 44/07/93

Distr: UA/SC

Please bring this to the attention of the person responsible for outreach work in your section as it is felt that appeals from journalists, writers and environmentalists would be particularly effective

UA 238/93

Health Concern/Legal Concern

20 July 1993

NIGERIA: Ken Saro-Wiwa, 51, writer and spokesperson for the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)
N.G. Dube, member of MOSOP
Kobari Nwile, member of MOSOP

Amnesty International is concerned about the health of Ken Saro-Wiwa who suffers from a serious heart condition and who, while in custody, has been denied the medication and treatment that he needs.

Ken Saro-Wiwa was arrested in Port Harcourt in Rivers State in eastern Nigeria on 21 June 1993 together with N.G. Dube and Kobari Nwile. All three are prominent members of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP).

Ken Saro-Wiwa is also President of the Ethnic Minority Rights Organization of Africa (EMIROAF). Following their arrest, Ken Saro-Wiwa, N.G. Dube and Kobari Nwile were first transferred to Lagos, then to Owerri in Imo State and finally to Port Harcourt where they are currently in prison. According to reports, Ken Saro-Wiwa suffers from a heart condition which requires regular medication which he has been unable to obtain since his arrest. On 16 July he is reported to have twice lost consciousness in detention. Requests by his doctor for his admittance to a hospital have been refused, despite an order issued by the High Court in Port Harcourt on 17 July authorizing his transfer from prison to hospital. There is concern that Ken Saro-Wiwa's health will seriously deteriorate if he does not immediately obtain the treatment he requires.

Ken Saro-Wiwa, N.G. Dube and Kobari Nwile were charged on 13 July 1993 under the Criminal Code of Eastern Nigeria in connection with their activities on behalf of the Ogoni community. They were charged on six counts relating to unlawful assembly, seditious intention and seditious publication. They were refused bail and remanded in custody until 20 September. Amnesty International believes that they are prisoners of conscience who have been detained because of their political activities and who have neither used nor advocated violence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Ogoni community has been campaigning against the environmental damage to their homeland in Rivers State and the destruction of their land and crops caused by the extraction of petrochemicals by oil companies, including Shell and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), for which they have received no compensation. MOSOP has been active in defending the rights of the Ogoni community and in raising awareness of their plight. Ken Saro-Wiwa was arrested on two separate occasions in April 1993. He subsequently obtained

an injunction from the High Court in Port Harcourt restraining members of the security forces from further harassing, arresting and detaining him. On 11 June his passport was confiscated at Lagos airport, preventing him from travelling to Vienna to represent MOSOP at the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights.

Ken Saro-Wiwa is also President of the Association of Nigerian Authors (ANA).

In addition to campaigning journalism, he has written novels and children's books. He is also a publisher who has published and distributed his own work and that of other Nigerian writers.

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

- expressing concern about reports that Ken Saro-Wiwa, who has been under arrest since 21 June 1993, suffers from a serious heart condition which requires immediate medical attention and urging that he be transferred to a hospital;

- expressing concern that Ken Saro-Wiwa, N.G. Dude and Kobari Nwile have been detained solely for expressing their political opinions without using or advocating violence, urging that all charges against them be dropped and that, as prisoners of conscience, they be immediately and unconditionally released

APPEALS TO:

1) General Ibrahim Babangida
President and Chairman of the
National Defence and Security
Council
State House
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

**Telegrams: President Babangida,
Abuja, Nigeria**
**Telexes: [0905] 91529 or 91530
EXTNAL NG (via Ministry
of Foreign Affairs)**

Salutation: Dear President

2) Mr Clement Akpamgbo
Attorney General of the Federation,
Minister of Justice and member
of the National Defence and
Security Council
Ministry of Justice
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

**Telegrams: Attorney General
Akpamgbo, Abuja,
Nigeria**
**Telexes: [0905] 91529 or 91530
EXTNAL NG (via Ministry
of Foreign Affairs)**

3) Mr Rufus Ada George
State Governor
Government House
91000 Port Harcourt
Rivers State
Nigeria

**Telegrams: State Governor Rufus
Ada George, Port
Harcourt, Nigeria**

Salutation: Dear Governor

4) Mr Acho Ogbonna
Attorney General and Commissioner
for Justice
State Commission for Justice
POB 5020
Ikwerre Road
91000 Port Harcourt
Rivers State, Nigeria

**Telegrams: State Attorney General
Acho Ogbonna, Port
Harcourt, Nigeria**

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO: any of the following newspapers:

Nigerian Star, PMB 73, 97 Aggrey Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Daily Times, PMB 21340, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
National Concord, POB 4483, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
The Guardian, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria
Newswatch, PMB 21499, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

Copies of appeals should be sent to diplomatic representatives of Nigeria in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 August 1993.