

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 200/94 (AFR 44/03/94, 24 May 1994) - Prisoner of conscience / Legal Concern and new concern: Health concern

NIGERIA: Ken Saro-Wiwa, writer, President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)
and also: Ledum Mitee, lawyer, Deputy President of MOSOP, chairman of Rivers State branch of the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO)
Barinem Kiobel, Commissioner (minister) of Commerce and Industry in the Rivers State administration

Amnesty International is continuing to call for the immediate and unconditional release of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other members of the Ogoni community who are prisoners of conscience.

Ken Saro-Wiwa has now been held for more than a month and has been denied visits from a lawyer and his family. Arrested on 22 May 1994 in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, in southeast Nigeria, he was initially held in Bori Military Camp, Port Harcourt, but was removed in early June to another, unknown, place of detention. While held in Bori Military Camp he was reported to have been held in leg irons which resulted in swelling of one of his legs. He also suffers from a heart complaint for which he is not receiving medical attention.

Although accused of being responsible for the murder of four leading members of the Ogoni community at a meeting held in Giokoo in Ogoniland, Rivers State, on 21 May 1994, it is not clear whether he has been formally charged. The state authorities claimed that he had incited youths to murder the four men, after he was prevented by the security forces from campaigning for the elections of delegates to a constitutional conference. Amnesty International believes that the accusations against him are unfounded, that he has neither used nor advocated violence and that his most recent detention, as on several occasions in the past, is solely because of his campaign against environmental damage and inadequate compensation by oil companies operating in Ogoniland.

Amnesty International is also calling for the release of Ledum Mitee, who was also arrested on 22 May, and all other prisoners of conscience. These are believed to include Barinem Kiobel, a recently appointed Commissioner (minister) in the Rivers State administration, and several other prominent members of the Ogoni community, arrested around the same time and held at Bori Military Camp; none are known to have been charged with any offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In the days and weeks following the murders on 21 May, the presence of security forces in Ogoniland has been intensified, ostensibly in order to search for those directly responsible for the killings. However, the security forces have indiscriminately arrested members of the Ogoni community; reports suggest that several hundred have been arrested and are detained either at Bori Military Camp or at Kpor in Ogoniland. Some are reported to have been released after the extortion of large amounts of money by soldiers.

The security forces are reported to have attacked some 30 Ogoni villages; over 50 people are reported to have been deliberately and arbitrarily killed during

these attacks and more than 180 have been injured (please refer to UA 249/94, AFR 44/06/94, 27 June 1994).

Ken Saro-Wiwa has been repeatedly arrested and harassed by the security forces in the past because of his campaign on behalf of the Ogoni people, and specifically because of his influence both within the Ogoni community and internationally. Ledum Mitee has also been previously detained; he was held for a week without charge following his arrest on 28 December 1993.

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

- expressing concern about the continued detention of Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ledum Mitee, Barinem Kiobel and other members of the Ogoni ethnic group detained in Rivers State since May 1994;
- urging the immediate and unconditional release of Ken Saro-Wiwa, Ledum Mitee and all others who have been detained solely because of their non-violent political activities and criticism of government policies or because of their ethnic origin;
- requesting clarification of Ken Saro-Wiwa's place of detention and urging that he and all other detainees be allowed immediate and subsequent regular visits from lawyers and members of their family and also that they receive all necessary medical treatment;
- requesting clarification of the legislation under which they are being held and any charges against them.

APPEALS TO:

Telexes: (for appeal addresses 1-3): [0905] 91529 or 91530 EXTNAL NG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

1. General Sani Abacha
Chairman, Provisional Ruling Council,
Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces and Minister of Defence
State House, Abuja
Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Telegrams: General Abacha, Abuja, Nigeria
Salutation: Dear General Abacha

2. Dr Olu Onagoruwa
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Telegrams: Minister of Justice Onagoruwa, Abuja, Nigeria
Salutation: Dear Minister

3. Lt-Gen D.O. Diya
Chief of General Staff
State House, Abuja
Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Telegrams: Chief of Staff Diya, Abuja, Nigeria
Salutation: Dear Lieutenant-General Diya

4. Lt-Col Dauda M. Komo
State Military Administrator
Government House
91000 Port Harcourt

Rivers State, Nigeria

Telegrams; Administrator Komo, Government House, Rivers State, Nigeria

Salutation: Dear Administrator

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Editor, *The Guardian*, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria

The Editor, *National Concord*, POB 4483, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

The Editor, *The Punch*, PMB 21204, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

The Editor, *Nigerian Tide*, PMB 5072, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

The Editor, *Point*, 222 Aba Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

The Editor, *Weekly Sunray*, 220 Aba Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

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 8 August 1994.