

EXTERNAL

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Fear of ill-treatment/legal concern

5 November 1997

**NIGERIA**      **Mohammed Adamu, Bureau Chief in Abuja of African  
Concord news magazine  
Soji Omotunde, editor of African Concord**

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There is concern for the safety and well-being of Mohammed Adamu and Soji Omotunde, detained incommunicado since 27 July 1997 and 25 October respectively.

The two men have not been charged with any offence or brought before a court and the conditions in which they are detained are likely to be harsh (see below).

There is particular concern for Soji Omotunde who is in need of regular ongoing medical treatment for injuries sustained in a car accident in January.

Mohammed Adamu was reportedly detained in connection with an article in *African Concord* magazine critical of Major Mohammed Hamza Al-Mustapha, Chief Security Officer to the Head of State. The reason for the detention of **Soji Omotunde** is unknown. Soji Omotunde was arrested in Lagos by two security agents who reportedly blocked his car with an unmarked vehicle, pushed him to the ground and gagged him before forcing him into their car.

The Concord newspaper group, banned between 1993 and 1995, is owned by the family of Moshood Abiola, the imprisoned winner of the June 1993 presidential elections.

Under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984, the government can order the indefinite detention of any person suspected of threatening the security of the state. The Decree prohibits any legal challenge to detention and provides no safeguards against arbitrary imprisonment or against torture or ill-treatment.

Some of the journalists recently detained have been held in harsh conditions.

The conditions of one journalist at the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) detention facility in Apapa, Lagos, were described by an observer in the following way: "*The cell was small, dark and wet (water was thrown on it, so that apart from the wetness and cold, the mosquitos would not allow him to sleep). [The prisoner] was chained by his wrists to the bars of the cell door...He complained that he was not being fed... There was no furniture in the cell. No bed, no mattress and no toilet facilities. He slept in his clothes, in the water, on the floor...*"

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

There have been several recent assaults and arrests of journalists. On 1 October 1997 **Tenkum Kokoh** of *The Democrat* and **Folu Oyewusi** of the *Daily Sketch* were detained in Makurdi, Benue state, for holding a seminar on the proposed return to civilian rule in October 1998. On 6 October, eight broadcasting staff from Yobe State Television were reportedly beaten by soldiers because the State Military Administrator objected to a program about the achievements of his predecessor. On 10 October **Henry Ugbolue**, Kaduna correspondent of *The News* group, was assaulted and arrested by security police for writing a report about the sacking of more than 20,000 civil servants. He was released without charge the same day. On 17 October **Ademola Adimboye** of *The News* and **Gbenga Alaketu** of *Tempo* were arrested in Abuja and detained without charge for two days in connection with a *Tempo* report about the current Sultan of Sokoto. On 18 October **Tokunbo Awoshakin** of *This Day*, **Wisdom Dike** of *The Week*, **Ola Doifie** of *Post Express*, **Casmir Igbokwe** of *The News* and **Joseph Ollor-Obari** of the *Guardian* were briefly detained for questioning in Ogbia in the Niger Delta.

They were seeking to report a demonstration by environmentalists against Shell and the government. They were reportedly released with warnings not to publish anything. On 3 November journalist **Ladi Olorunyomi** was arrested in the middle of the night by officers of the Directorate of Military Intelligence and detained throughout the day for questioning concerning the whereabouts of her husband, exiled journalist Dapo Olorunyomi, and journalists currently in hiding. Her house keys were seized and she was ordered to report to the Directorate offices on a daily basis. She was previously detained for more than six weeks from March to May 1997.

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

- expressing concern at the arbitrary detention of *African Concord* journalists **Mohammed Adamu** and **Soji Omotunde** on 27 July and 25 October 1997 respectively and enquiring as to the reason for their continued detention without charge or trial;
- expressing concern that they may be subjected to ill-treatment in detention, and urging that they be given immediate access to their families, lawyers and doctors of their own choice;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences and promptly and fairly tried;
- expressing concern at recent reports of the arbitrary detention and ill-treatment of other journalists;
- appealing for an end to the assault, detention and harassment of journalists and the relatives of journalists and others in exile.

**APPEALS TO:**

General Sani Abacha  
 Chairman, Provisional Ruling Council  
 State House, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: General Abacha, Abuja, Nigeria**  
**Faxes: + 234 9 523 2138**  
**Salutation: Dear General**

Dr Auwalu Hamisu Yadudu  
 Special adviser to the Head of State on legal matters  
 State House, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: Dr Yadudu, State House, Abuja, Nigeria**  
**Salutation: Dear Dr Yadudu**

Colonel Ibrahim Sabo  
 Director, Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI)  
 Park Lane, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: Colonel Sabo, Director, DMI, Lagos, Nigeria**  
**Salutation: Dear Colonel**

**COPIES TO:**

Chief Tom Ikimi  
 Minister of Foreign Affairs  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Maputo Street  
 PMB 130, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

Mr Justice P.K. Nwokedi, Chairman  
 National Human Rights Commission  
 National Assembly Complex, Maitama  
 PMB 444, Garki

Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

The Editor, *The News*, PMB 21531, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

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

The Editor, *Daily Sketch*, PMB 5067, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

The Editor, *The Week*, PO Box 11333, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

The Editor, *The Democrat*, POB 4457, Kaduna South, Kaduna State, Nigeria

The Editor, *This Day*, PO Box 54749, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria

The Editor, *The Guardian*, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, 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 18 December 1997.