

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 51/07/98

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Further information on 35/98 (AFR 51/04/98, 5 February 1998) - Fear of torture and ill-treatment/Prisoner of conscience

SIERRA LEONE Michael Lawson, student

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Amnesty International has received confirmation that Michael Lawson was released on 13 February 1998 after Nigerian troops of the West African force deployed in Sierra Leone entered Freetown, forcing the ruling Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC) from power.

Michael Lawson, a university student at Fourah Bay College in Freetown, had been arrested on 30 January 1998, apparently accused of passing information to a radio station broadcasting in support of the government of President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, which was overthrown by the AFRC in a military coup in May 1997.

Amnesty International considered Michael Lawson to be a prisoner of conscience and there were fears for his safety since torture and ill-treatment of those perceived to oppose the AFRC were routine.

No further action by Urgent Action participants is requested. Thank you to all those who took action, particularly as it was often difficult to send faxes to Freetown.