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SOUTH AFRICA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO
PUT PRESSURE ON NIGERIA

Amnesty International continues its efforts to lobby world leaders to step up their pressure on General Sani Abacha to commute the death sentences confirmed yesterday in Nigeria. The organization's Secretary General, Pierre Sané, who is currently in South Africa, met Deputy President of South Africa, Thabo Mbeki, and Deputy Foreign Minister, Aziz Pahad, today in Pretoria.

Mr. Sané asked the South African government what steps it was taking to prevent the executions of Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni minority activists and urged Deputy President Mbeki to make it clear to General Abacha that the death sentences were a flagrant violation of human rights.

Amnesty international appealed to the South African government to plead for clemency for all nine activists. Mr. Sané called on the government to make public its appeal to the Nigerian authorities.

"It is only by publishing appeals, that the Nigerian people and others know what the world thinks of these death sentences and what is being done to try to prevent them being carried out," Mr. Sané said.