

EXTRA 58/99

Fear of torture / Fear for safety / Prisoners of conscience

7 May 1999

TOGO

Tengue Nestor, human rights defender

Gayibor François, human rights defender

Sant'Anna Brice

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of human rights defenders Tengue Nestor and Gayibor François, who were arrested by police, together with Sant'Anna Brice, in the capital, Lomé, on 3 May 1999. All three are at risk of torture.

Tengue Nestor and Gayibor François are both executive members of the *Association togolaise pour la défense et la promotion des droits de l'homme* (ATDPDH), Togolese Association for the defence and promotion of human rights. Sant'Anna Brice is also thought to have worked closely with ATDPDH. After their arrest the police raided the house of Tengue Nestor and seized ATDPDH documents containing the names of others, who may now be in danger.

The three men are accused of "*atteinte au crédit et à la sûreté de l'Etat, diffusion de fausses nouvelles, faux et usage de faux*", "attack on the credibility and security of the State, spreading false information and using forged documents". This follows accusations that members of the ATDPDH sent false information about human rights violations committed by the government to international human rights organizations, including Amnesty International. They are accused of acting under instructions from opposition parties, the *Convention démocratique des peuples africains* (CDPA), African People's Democratic Convention and the *Union des forces du changement* (UFC), Union of Forces for Change.

Their arrests may also be linked to an Amnesty International report accusing the Togolese government of allowing the security forces to carry out grave human rights violations with impunity before, during and after the elections in 1998. The government has reacted angrily to the report which was leaked to them some time before its official publication on 5 May.

The men are detained at the *Sûreté Nationale* (National Security Service) in Lomé. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For years, a constant stream of information about human rights violations in Togo has been emerging. Extrajudicial executions, and "disappearances" are carried out with total impunity in the country, governed since 1967 by President Gnassingbé Eyadéma. Arbitrary arrests followed by torture and ill-treatment, sometimes result in deaths in detention. These violations are largely attributable to the security forces who have acted for years without being accountable to the law.

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

- expressing concern that Tengue Nestor, Gayibor François and Sant'Anna Brice, who were arrested by Togolese police on 3 May 1999, may be at risk of torture and urging the authorities to ensure that their physical integrity is guaranteed;
- expressing concern that they have been detained solely because of their human rights work and as such that you consider them to be prisoners of conscience;

- calling on the Togolese authorities to release the three men immediately and unconditionally;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that no one is subjected to human rights violations as a result of information contained in the ATDPDH documents which were seized by the security forces.

APPEALS TO:

President of the Republic

Son Excellence

Monsieur le Général Gnassingbé Eyadéma

Président de la République

Palais Présidentiel

Avenue de la Marina

Lomé, Togo

Telegrams:Président, Lomé, Togo

Faxes:+ 228 21 68 12 (attention of Président de la République)

Salutation:Son Excellence / Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior

Général de Brigade Séyi Memene

Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité

Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité

Rue Albert Sarraut

Lomé, Togo

Telegrams:Ministre l'Intérieur, Lomé, Togo

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

M. Bitokotipou Yagninim

Garde des Sceaux, Ministre de la Justice

Ministère de la Justice

Avenue de la Marina

Rue Colonel de Roux

Lomé, Togo

Telegrams:Ministre Justice, Lomé, Togo

Salutation:Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Public Prosecutor

Monsieur Yaya Abdoulaye

Procureur Général

BP 342

Lomé, Togo

Telegrams:Procureur Général, Lomé, Togo

Salutation: Monsieur le Procureur Général / Dear Procureur

COPIES TO:

Crocodile (Newspaper), BP 60087 Lomé, Togo

Togo presse, BP 891 Lomé, Togo

and to diplomatic representatives of Togo accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 4 June 1999.