

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 57/10/99

UA 124/99 Fear of arrest / Fear for safety

27 May 1999

TOGO Boulovi Arsène, president of ACAT-Togo] human rights
 Adjoh Benjamin, deputy treasurer of ACAT-Togo] defenders
 Two non-Togolese nationals

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Arsène Bolouvi, President of the Togolese Section of the *Association des Chrétiens pour l'abolition de la torture* (ACAT), Association of Christians for the Abolition of Torture, and Benjamin Adjoh, deputy treasurer of the organization. Both men have been in hiding since 26 May 1999, when the security forces attempted to arrest them. Amnesty International believes that if they were arrested, they would be prisoners of conscience, and they could be at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

Members of the security forces broke into Benjamin Adjoh's house on 26 May. Not finding him, they detained his younger brother, who was released some hours later, and two other people, non-Togolese nationals, who were there at the time. These two people are still held at the *Sûreté Nationale* (National Security Service) in Lomé, where they may be at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Three human rights defenders have been arrested since the beginning of May. All these arrests appear to be linked to an Amnesty International report, published in early May, 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. Human rights defenders Tengue Nestor and Gayibor François were arrested by police, together with Sant'Anna Brice, in Lomé, on 3 May (see EXTRA 58/99, 7 May, AFR 57/04/99). Nadjombe Antoine Koffi, a Togolese Amnesty International member, was arrested on 14 May in Lomé (See UA 112/99, 18 May, AFR 57/06/99). Amnesty International considers all of them to be prisoners of conscience.

For years there has been a constant stream of reports of human rights violations in Togo. Extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" are carried out with total impunity in the country, ruled since 1967 by President Gnassingbé Eyadéma. Arbitrary arrests are followed by torture and ill-treatment, sometimes resulting in deaths in custody. 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 for the safety of Arsène Bolouvi and Benjamin Adjoh, who escaped arrest on 26 May 1999 and are currently in hiding, should they be arrested;
- urging the authorities to ensure that the two people arrested in Benjamin Adjoh's house are not tortured or ill-treated in custody;
- expressing concern that since the beginning of May several people, including three human rights defenders, have been arrested and are prisoners of conscience;
- calling on the Togolese authorities to release those who remain in detention immediately and unconditionally.

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 Mr Yaya

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 8 July 1999.