

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Extrajudicial executions

29 April 1991

UGANDA: Modesto Agaba - farmer
Ochieng - farmer
Santo Alero - local community
leader (father of Ochieng)
Santa Achero (f)

and over 70 others

Some 70 prisoners are reported to have been executed extrajudicially by government troops - killed without any trial while they were in custody - in the course of counter-insurgency operations in the northern district of Kitgum.

On 10 April 1991 army units operating in the areas of Atang and Acholibur in the south of Kitgum District reportedly detained several hundred men and women, assembling them at the homestead of an alleged rebel commander. Most of the women were threatened with execution but were nevertheless released.

However, a woman called Santa Achero and one other, both of whom had been living with the insurgents until a few weeks earlier, apparently after being abducted by them, were reported to have been executed extrajudicially.

Men detained in the same areas were reportedly questioned some distance away from the homestead in groups of six. Several were released but others are reported to have been extrajudicially executed, among them Santo Alero, a leader of the local community, his son Ochieng, and another farmer called Modesto Agaba. It is reported that as many as 35 other prisoners may have been extrajudicially executed.

Government troops are also reported to have been responsible for the deaths of at least 33 civilian prisoners during operations in the north of Kitgum District in the first week of April.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Uganda Government has been facing armed insurgency in the north and east of the country since late 1986. There have been mass arrests, which have frequently led to people being imprisoned without charge or trial for several years, and many incidents where the army has been responsible for the extrajudicial execution of prisoners and unarmed civilians. In addition to the extrajudicial executions mentioned above, there have been reports of hundreds of detentions in Gulu, Kitgum, Lira and Apac Districts.

Since 1988 Amnesty International has repeatedly pressed the government to mount prompt and impartial investigations into incidents of alleged extrajudicial execution. Despite statements promising inquiries, not one public report has yet been produced.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports that government soldiers have deliberately executed prisoners in Kitgum District in April 1991 in the context of military

operations in rural areas;

- urging the government to order immediate impartial investigations into the reported extrajudicial execution of Santa Achero, Santo Alero, Modesto Agaba, Ochieng and at least 35 other prisoners from Atang and Acholibur on 10 April 1991;
- urging that these investigations be concluded promptly and that they make recommendations about how extrajudicial executions can be prevented in the future;
- expressing concern that government inquiries into previous reports of extrajudicial executions, such as the inquiry to investigate incidents in Gulu District at the end of 1988, have yet to publish their conclusions;
- urging the government to bring to justice those who the investigations suggest have been responsible for human rights violations.

APPEALS TO

President Yoweri Museveni
President of the Republic
Office of the President
Parliament Buildings
PO Box 7168
Kampala, Uganda

Telegrams: President Museveni, State House, Entebbe, Uganda

Faxes: + 256 41 235462

Telexes: 61048 KAPITAL or 61006 VICTORIA

Prof George Kanyeihamba
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 7183
Kampala, Uganda

Telegrams: Justice Minister Kanyeihamba, Kampala, Uganda

Telexes: 61007 ADMINISTER

General David Tinyefunza
Minister of State for Defence
Ministry of Defence
PO Box 3798
Kampala, Uganda

Telegrams: Minister of State Tinyefunza, Kampala, Uganda

Telexes: 61203 (PLEASE NOTE CORRECTED TELEX NUMBER)

Mrs Betty Bigombe
Minister of State for the North and East
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box 341
Kampala, Uganda

Telegrams: Mrs Bigombe, Minister for North & East, Kampala, Uganda

Telexes: 61092

and to diplomatic representatives of Uganda in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 May 1991.