

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 141/91 (AFR 59/08/91, 26 April 1991) - Legal Concern/Torture

UGANDA: Michael Alip Atepu - member of the national assembly
Omara Atubo - member of the national assembly
Irene Apiu Laju - member of the national assembly
Okodi Levi - member of the national assembly
Zachary Olum - member of the national assembly

Michael Alip Atepu and Okodi Levi, members of parliament from Lira District in northern Uganda, who were arrested shortly after the 30 March 1991, were released on 28 April 1991.

It was reported that complaints they made to the military authorities in Lira about allegations of arbitrary arrests, beatings, rapes and extrajudicial executions during on-going military counter-insurgency operations in Gulu, Kitgum, Lira and Apac Districts led to their arrest. Neither was charged with any offence or brought before a court.

No further action is required on their behalf.

Three other members of parliament from northern Uganda, arrested on 15 April 1991 in Kampala, remain in detention without charge or trial. Omara Atubo, Zachary Olum and Irene Apiu Laju are reported to have been arrested following a visit to northern Uganda where they too complained about army conduct in the course of the military operations mounted in northern Uganda since late March. They are believed to have been taken from Kampala to Lira, where they remain in military custody. Several hundred other people have also been arrested since 30 March 1991.

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 arrests mentioned above, there have been reports of hundreds of detentions and incidents of extrajudicial execution and soldiers raping prisoners in Gulu and Kitgum Districts.

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

- expressing concern at the continuing detention without charge or trial of possible prisoners of conscience Omara Atubo, Irene Apiu Laju and Zachary Olum, who are reported to have been arrested while taking up the cases of people in their constituencies who were alleged to have been victims of human rights violations;

- expressing concern that they continue to be held incommunicado in military custody and urging that they be referred promptly to a judicial authority and

that they be allowed visits by relatives and legal representatives;

- urging that unless they are to be charged with recognisably criminal offenses and brought promptly to trial, Omara Atubo, Irene Apiu Laju and Zachary Olum and all other detainees be immediately released.

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; 61006 VICTORIA

Mr George Cosmas Adyebo
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
PO Box 341
Kampala, Uganda

Telegrams: Prime Minister Adyebo, Kampala, Uganda

Telexes: 62001

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

Telegrams: Defence Minister Tinyefunza, Kampala, Uganda

Telexes: 61023

COPIES TO:

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

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 19 June 1991.