

Worldwide Appeals January 2008

NWS 22/001/2008

Libya

Detained for planning a demonstration

Idriss Boufayed, a human rights defender, is being held in Ain Zara prison in Tripoli. He was arrested in February 2007 while planning a peaceful demonstration in the capital and is currently on trial. He is a prisoner of conscience.

While based in Switzerland, where he had refugee status, he publicly criticized the Libyan authorities. He returned to Libya in September 2006 after being issued a passport and receiving assurances from the Libyan embassy in Bern that he would not be at risk if he re-entered the country. However, he was arrested on 5 November 2006 and held incommunicado until he was released without charge on 29 December.

At the beginning of February 2007, Idriss Boufayed and three other men published their plans for a demonstration in Tripoli on foreign news websites. Set for 17 February, the protest was to mark the first anniversary of the killing and injuring of demonstrators by security forces in Benghazi. On 16 February he was arrested at his home in the town of Gheryan.

Idriss Boufayed and 13 other men were charged with offences including possession of weapons, incitement to demonstrate and communication with enemy powers. The trial was transferred to a new State Security Court after its creation in August 2007 to try political cases.

Please write, calling for Idriss Boufayed's immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience.

Send appeals to: His Excellency Mu'ammarr al-Gaddafi, Leader of the Revolution, Office of the Leader of the Revolution, Tripoli, Libya

Email: info@algathafi.org

Salutation: Your Excellency

Rwanda

Human rights defender imprisoned

François-Xavier Byuma, human rights defender and President of the NGO Turengere Abana, is serving a 19-year prison sentence following a grossly unfair trial. The presiding judge at his trial had been named by the NGO as the perpetrator of a rape.

Turengere Abana, which investigates violations of children's rights including sexual violence, published its findings on the case in May 2007. Its report concluded that a 17-year-old girl had been raped by the judge, who presides at a local gacaca (community-based) court in the Bilyogo district of the capital, Kigali.

On 3 May, François-Xavier Byuma received a summons from the same court. He was charged with receiving firearms training, assaulting a Tutsi woman and "participating in an attack". The trial took place on 13 May.

François-Xavier Byuma's objection to the judge was overruled by the court. Amnesty International was informed that, during two separate hearings, prosecution witnesses gave highly questionable testimony and that the court prevented François-Xavier Byuma from

presenting all his witnesses. He was sentenced on 27 May. He appealed against the verdict and sentence but his appeal was dismissed on 18 August.

The judge's refusal to let François-Xavier Byuma's witnesses give evidence denied him his right to a fair trial before an independent and impartial tribunal.

Please write, asking for François-Xavier Byuma's appeal verdict and sentence to be overturned, and that he be given a retrial which complies fully with international standards of fair trial.

Send appeals to: Executive Secretary of the National Service of Gacaca Jurisdictions, Mme Domitile Mukantaganzwa, National Service of Gacaca Jurisdictions, BP 1874, Kigali, Rwanda

Fax +250 586 647

Salutation: Madame la Secrétaire Exécutive/Dear Executive Secretary

Georgia

Who was behind the killing of Sandro Girgvliani?

Sandro Girgvliani, a senior bank employee, died in January 2006 after being severely beaten by officers of the Interior Ministry. Although four officers were convicted and sentenced to between seven and eight years in prison, Amnesty International fears that those who gave the orders for the crime have escaped justice.

On 27 January 2006 officers of the Interior Ministry abducted Sandro Girgvliani and his friend Levan Bukhaidze, took them to the village of Okrokana, near the capital Tbilisi, and beat them severely. Levan Bukhaidze survived the attack but Sandro Girgvliani died as a result of his injuries. His body was found near a local cemetery the following day.

According to unofficial sources, the abduction and beatings were connected to an argument which took place earlier that evening between the two young men and senior Interior Ministry officials at a bar in the centre of Tbilisi.

In March 2006 the Interior Minister announced that the murder of Sandro Girgvliani had been solved and four suspects arrested. However, in the light of allegations that senior officials of the Interior Ministry had ordered the beatings, human rights organizations asked for the investigation to be widened.

A draft resolution drawn up by opposition parties calling for a special investigation into the killing was rejected by Parliament in February 2007.

Please write, calling on the Georgian authorities to set up an impartial, independent and thorough investigation into allegations that the four officials convicted for killing Sandro Girgvliani acted on the orders of others, including senior officials of the Interior Ministry, and to ensure that anyone found responsible for ordering the killings is brought to justice.

Send appeals to: Mikheil Saakashvili, Office of the President of Georgia, 7 Ingorokva, 0105 Tbilisi, Georgia

Fax: +995 32 99 96 30 / 99 08 79 Email: office@presidpress.gov.ge

Salutation: Dear President Saakashvili