

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 49/004/2001

Distrib: PG/SC

To: Health professionals

From: Medical office / West Africa team

Date: 11 October 2001

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Deteriorating health of Michel Pereira
Senegal**

Key words: lack of medical care / ill-health / prison conditions

Amnesty International's concerns

Michel Pereira, a Senegalese national imprisoned in Dakar "Reubeuss" Central Prison, is in poor health and in need of immediate medical care. He has been detained without trial since August 1997 and seems to be psychologically disturbed.

Michel Pereira was arrested on 29 August 1997 near the Dial Diop military camp in Dakar accused of threatening state security. He has since been detained without trial. An Amnesty International delegation interviewed Michel Pereira while visiting the prison in June 2001. The delegation was concerned at Michel Pereira's mental health and by the lack of medical care. No medical services are available in the prison and two other detainees interviewed at the time confirmed that Michel Pereira had not seen a medical doctor since his arrest. Conditions in the prison (also known as "100 square metres") are generally poor.

Practical safeguards aimed at protecting detainees and their health have been laid down in a number of UN principles and rules. The *Body of Principles for the Protection of all Persons Under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment* (1988) urges states to provide medical examinations and treatment to detainees:

Principle 24

A proper medical examination shall be offered to a detained or imprisoned person as promptly as possible after his admission to the place of detention or imprisonment, and thereafter medical care and treatment shall be provided whenever necessary. This care and treatment shall be provided free of charge. (..)

The *UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners* state:

Article 22

(1) At every institution there shall be available the services of at least one qualified medical officer who should have some knowledge of psychiatry. The medical services should be organized in close relationship to the general health administration of the community or nation. They shall include a psychiatric service for the diagnosis and, in proper cases, the treatment of states of mental abnormality.

(2) Sick prisoners who require specialist treatment shall be transferred to specialized institutions or to civil hospitals. Where hospital facilities are provided in an institution, their equipment, furnishings and pharmaceutical supplies shall be proper for the medical care and treatment of sick prisoners, and there shall be a staff of suitable trained officers.

Amnesty International urges authorities to provide him with access to appropriate medical care as a matter of urgency. The organization also calls for his immediate and unconditional release unless he is charged with a recognisable criminal offence.

Recommended actions

Please write letters preferably in French or English:

seeking information about the current health of Michel Pereira, imprisoned in Dakar central prison;
urging he is provided with adequate medical care according to his needs as provided for by international human rights standards such as the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners [Article 22];

citing the above international standards of human rights in your letter addressed to Senegalese government authorities;

calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Michel Pereira unless he is charged with a recognisable criminal offence.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 15 December 2001 and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

Addresses

Human Rights adviser in the office of the President

Monsieur Oumar DIOUF
Délégué aux droits humains et à la paix auprès de la Présidence de la République
Président de la République
Avenue Roume, BP 168
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Minister for Justice

Monsieur Basile SENGHOR
Ministre de la Justice Garde des Sceau
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Dakar, Sénégal
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Senegal Committee for Human Rights

Monsieur Youssoutha NDIAYE
Président du comité sénégalais des droits de l'homme
Immeuble Pasteur, 9 avenue Pasteur, 3 ième étage
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Copies to:

Minister for Foreign Affairs

Monsieur Cheick TIDIANE GADIO
Ministre des Affaires étrangères et des Sénégalais de l'extérieur
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
Place de l'Indépendance
Dakar, Sénégal
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Please send copies of your letters to diplomatic representatives of Senegal accredited to your country.