

UA 179/00

Arbitrary

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

6 Members of the National Prison Fellowship in Congo:

Pastor Tshisumpa

Jonas Mukamba

Pastor Nkashama

Mianda Tshimona (f)

M Tshitenge

Christophe Tshimona

And:

Mieke Rang (f), Dutch NGO worker

Kalobo, driver

Caroline Pare (f), BBC television producer

Pierre Mombele

The ten people named above are at grave risk of torture at the hands of the Congolese security services. They were all arrested recently in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

On 23 June 2000 four members of a prisoner support group called the *Fraternité Nationale de prison au Congo* (FNPC), National Prison Fellowship in Congo, were arrested at the home of one of its members, Jonas Mukamba Kadiata, by the security service known as the *Détection militaire des activités anti-patries* (DEMIAP - the Military Detection of Unpatriotic Activities). The FNPC members arrested were Pastor Tshisumpa, the FNPC president, Jonas Mukamba Kadiata, Pastor Nkashama and Mianda Tshimona. Mieke Rang, a Dutch national recently invited to Kinshasa by the FNPC, and the group's driver, Kalobo, were arrested at the same time.

They were taken to a DEMIAP detention centre in Kinshasa where Amnesty International has documented cases of torture in the past and where torture appears to be routine. They remain in detention and have been refused visits from lawyers or relatives.

On 24 June two other FNPC members, M. Tshitenge and Christophe Tshimona, were arrested when they sought information on the reasons for the initial arrests. Caroline Pare, a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) television producer, and her assistant, Pierre Mombele, were also arrested on 24 June near to Jonas Mukamba Kadiata's house, which had remained under security service surveillance.

Later that same day, Mianda Tshimona was reunited in custody with her eight-month-old baby.

To Amnesty International's knowledge, none of those arrested have been charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Following the arrests on 24 June, DEMIAP searched the house of Jonas Mukamba Kadiata and reportedly confiscated a number of documents, suggesting that the arrests may be directly linked to the detainees' peaceful activities as FNPC members. Jonas Mukamba Kadiata's house remains under surveillance and Amnesty International fears that other FNPC members may be at risk of arrest.

Jonas Mukamba Kadiata, a former director of a state-owned diamond mining company, was previously arrested in April 1997 by the armed group that brought President Laurent-Désiré Kabila to power. He was released in June 1997.

Human rights defenders in the DRC, along with peaceful political opponents, journalists and trade unionists, are regularly targeted by the DRC authorities in an attempt to stifle real or perceived opposition to the DRC government. The security services such as DEMIAP which implement these repressive measures are largely unaccountable and torture of detainees in their custody is widespread.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send e-mails/ telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in French or English or your own language:

- expressing concern at the apparently arbitrary arrest of FNPC members and others on 23 and 24 June 2000 by members of DEMIAP;
- expressing your fear that those arrested may be at risk of torture in the DEMIAP detention centre in Kinshasa and urging the authorities to take immediate steps to ensure that torture does not take place;
- urging that the detainees be given immediate access to lawyers and relatives and to any medical treatment which they might require;
- seeking clarification of what charges, if any, have been laid against the detainees;
- urging their immediate and unconditional release if they are not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence.

APPEALS TO:

President

Président Laurent-Désiré KABILA
Président de la République, Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema, Democratic Republic of Congo

Telegrams: President, Kinshasa, DR Congo

e-mails: UPP@ic.cd

Fax: +243 880 2120 (this number may be very difficult to get through to)

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear Président

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Mwenze KONGOLO
Ministre de la justice
Ministère de la justice
BP 3137 Kinshasa-Gombe, Democratic Republic of Congo

COPIES TO:

Minister of Human Rights

Monsieur Léonard SHE OKITUNDU
Ministre des Droits humains
Ministère des Droits humains
Kinshasa-Gombe, Democratic Republic of Congo

and to diplomatic representatives of the Democratic Republic of Congo accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 August 2000.