

EQUATORIAL GUINEA Marcelo Beta Echuaca

Bernardo Lola Sorizo

Juan Lola Sorizo

Justo Mete

Remigio Fernandez

Adamou Ousmane

Anselmo Ribado Rope

Silvia Eron, (f)

Antonia Macoli (f) and her husband

José Antonio Oliveira

Sabas Bolekia

Manuel Owono Obama (opposition party member)

About ten others

At least 20 people, mostly from the Bubi ethnic group, including an opposition party member, have been arrested since 24 November 1998, and are being held incommunicado in Malabo, the capital. Amnesty International fears for their safety, after reports that some or all have been tortured.

The Bubis are a minority on the mainland, but a majority on Bioko Island. A number of military barracks on the island were attacked in January 1998, leaving four soldiers and three civilians dead. The government blamed the attacks on the *Movimiento para la Autodeterminación de la Isla de Bioko* (MAIB), Movement for the self-determination of Bioko Island, a Bubi political party, and made many arrests.

Rumours that Guillermo Salomón Echuaca ("Alex"), an alleged leader of the attacks, had fled by boat to Nigeria led to his brother Marcelo Beta Echuaca and other relatives being arrested and reportedly tortured. Other Bubis were detained because they were suspected of hiding Guillermo Salomón Echuaca or helping him to flee. Owners of *cayucos* (small boats) that had been used to go to neighbouring Nigeria and Cameroon were also detained.

Manuel Owono Obama, member of the opposition party *Convergencia para la Democracia Social* (CPDS), Convergence for Social Democracy, was arrested in Malabo on 25 November. While he is not a member of the Bubi ethnic group, his arrest may be connected with the apparent flight of Guillermo Salomón Echuaca. It appears that he had been to Cameroon in a *cayuco*, reportedly to buy a saw. He has been severely tortured since his arrest. Amnesty International considers him a prisoner of conscience.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In May 1998 more than 117 people accused of involvement in the Bioko Island attacks were tried by a military court in Malabo. On 1 June 15 were sentenced to death, four of them (including Guillermo Salomón Echuaca) *in absentia*. Some 70 others were imprisoned for between six and 26 years. Many defendants, predominantly members of the Bubi ethnic group, appeared to have been detained solely because of their ethnic origin. Many of them had been forced to make statements under torture.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Spanish or your own language:

- requesting assurances that the people mentioned above are not being tortured or ill-treated and that they are being given access to their family, legal council and medical care;
- calling for these prisoners to be released unless they are charged with a recognisably criminal offence and given a prompt and fair trial;
- urging the authorities to provide all prisoners with enough food and water and adequate medical treatment if necessary;
- reminding the Equatorial Guinea Government of its commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, in particular Article 5: "No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment" and calling for an independent and impartial enquiry into reports of the torture of detainees held in connection with the attacks on military barracks in January 1998.

APPEALS TO:

President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo
Presidente de la República
Gabinete del Presidente de la República
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telegrams: Presidente Obiang, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Faxes: + 240 9 3313

Salutation: Excelencia / Your Excellency

Prime Minister Serafín Seriche Dougan
Primer Ministro

Gabinete del Primer Ministro
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telegrams: Primer Ministro Seriche Dougan, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Sr. Don / Dear Prime Minister

Secretary of State for Security, Colonel Manuel Nguema Mba
Secretario de Estado para la Seguridad Nacional
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telegrams: Colonel Manuel Nguema Mba, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Sr. Don / Dear Secretary of State

COPIES TO:

Vice-Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs
Miguel Oyono Ndong Mifumu
Vice-Primer Ministro y Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

and to diplomatic representatives of Equatorial Guinea accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 January 1999.