

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 51/05/98

This is a limited action. Please restrict appeals to FIVE per section

6 February 1998

Further information on UA 26/98 (AFR 51/02/98, 27 January 1998) - Torture or ill-treatment/ Probable prisoners of conscience

SIERRA LEONE
Brima S. Massaquoi, chairman of Kenema town council
Brima Kpaka, businessman
Abdulai Bockarie (also known as Swaray Kokowa), retired local government officer
Dr D.P.B. Momoh, medical doctor
Dr Stevens, medical doctor
a man known as "Potor Potor"
and new names: Matthew Lebbie
Patrick J. Kanneh
Andrew Quee
John Swaray
Samuel Sam
Paramount Chief Moinama Karmor, traditional ruler
Francis Musa

Amnesty International remains seriously concerned about the safety of several people, including prominent members of the community, who have been arrested in the town of Kenema in the Eastern Province of Sierra Leone.

They include Brima S. Massaquoi, chairman of Kenema town council, who was first arrested some three weeks ago and held at the Secretariat building in Kenema of the ruling Armed Forces Revolutionary Council (AFRC). He was released on 31 January 1998, together with Brima Kpaka, Dr D.P.B. Momoh and several others, but rearrested on 2 February. He is now held in police custody. Others are also reported to have been rearrested.

According to reports, those detained have been tortured and ill-treated. They were beaten about the head, kicked, had their arms tied tightly behind their heads and have sustained serious injuries as a result. One detainee was described as bleeding profusely from head wounds on his release. An as yet unconfirmed report said that one of the detainees had died as a result of torture.

The arrests in Kenema have occurred in the context of fierce fighting between soldiers, who have been joined by the former armed opposition Revolutionary Front (RUF), on the one hand and a civil defence force composed of traditional hunters, known as *kamajors*, on the other. The *kamajors* support President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah, who came to power in March 1996 after elections but who was ousted by the military coup in the May 1997 which brought the AFRC to power.

Those arrested are apparently suspected of supporting the *kamajors*. No charges have been brought against them.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Because of disruption to communications with Sierra Leone since May 1997, Urgent Action coordinators are asked to organize a limited number of appeals only. A restricted international postal service is operating through neighbouring Guinea, but delays are inevitable. Fax machines operate but sometimes intermittently.

Please send faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing serious concern about reports of the rearrest on 2 February 1998 of several members of the community in Kenema, including Brima S. Massaquoi, chairman of Kenema town council, who had been released only two days earlier;
- requesting details of all those held and clarification of the reasons for their continuing detention;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release, unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- expressing serious concern about reports that some of those detained have been tortured or ill-treated while in custody and urging immediate measures to ensure that they are protected from torture and ill-treatment and are humanely treated;
- requesting an immediate investigation into these reports of torture or ill-treatment in order to bring those responsible to justice;
- urging that all those detained be allowed immediate access to a doctor, a lawyer and members of their families.

APPEALS TO:

Lieutenant Colonel Johnny Paul Koroma
 Chairman, Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
 State House
 Independence Avenue
 Freetown, Sierra Leone
Faxes: + 232 22 24 21 26 / 232 22 22 78 78
Salutation: Dear Lieutenant Colonel Koroma

Colonel Abdul K. Sesay
 Secretary General, Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
 State House
 Independence Avenue
 Freetown, Sierra Leone
Faxes: + 232 22 22 94 73
Salutation: Dear Colonel Sesay

Mr Allieu Kamara
 Spokesman, Armed Forces Revolutionary Council
 State House
 Independence Avenue
 Freetown, Sierra Leone
Faxes: + 232 22 22 88 99
Salutation: Dear Mr Kamara

Mr Alimamy Paolo Bangura
 Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
 Department of Foreign Affairs
 14 Gloucester Street
 Freetown, Sierra Leone
Faxes: + 232 22 22 56 15
Salutation: Dear Mr Bangura

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 March 1998.