

EXTERNAL

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Possible extrajudicial execution/
Fear for safety

2 April 1997

COMOROS Abouna Halidi

Amnesty International has learned that Abouna Halidi, a Comorian citizen, was shot dead in Mutsamundu on the island of Anjouan following clashes between civil servants and the Comorian army on 14 March 1997. Amnesty International is concerned he may have been the victim of an extrajudicial execution and is calling for an investigation into the circumstances of his death. Amnesty International has also received reports that 20 people were wounded and 70 others were arrested by the army during the same demonstration.

This is the latest report of violence in a series of clashes between hospital workers, teachers, civil servants and the Comorian army and police. These clashes have occurred mostly in the capital Moroni and on the island of Anjouan.

Amnesty International is concerned at the excessive use of force on this occasion by the Comorian security forces and fears for the safety of civilians involved in any future peaceful demonstrations.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since January 1977, several demonstrations by the civilian population have been repressed with excessive force by the Comorian army and police. Last year President Mohamed Taki announced that all state employees would receive their salary arrears by 31 December 1996. The deadline was then postponed to 31 March 1997. When the Prime Minister announced payment of only one month's salary in January 1997, many government employees started peaceful public protests. The Comorian army and police were sent in to break up the demonstrations.

Freedom of association is increasingly threatened in the Comoros and repression of peaceful demonstrations appears likely to intensify as promises made by the government to pay salary arrears to civil servants, teachers and hospital staff become less and less reliable.

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

- expressing concern at reports that Abouna Halidi may have been extrajudicially executed during a demonstration on 14 March 1997;
- urging the Comorian authorities to open an immediate investigation into the death of Abouna Halidi and to ensure that anyone found responsible for his unlawful killing is brought to justice according to international standards of fairness;
- urging the Comorian Government to ensure the protection of unarmed civilians and to make clear to the police and the army that the government will not tolerate or condone any human rights violations, including the use of lethal force against unarmed civilians;
- reminding the Comorian government of its obligations to guarantee the right for everyone to freedom of association, including "*the right to form and join trade unions for protection of his interest*" under article 10 of the African Charter and under Convention Number 87 of the International Labour Organization to which the Comoros is a party.

APPEALS TO:

1. President

Mohamed Taki Abdoukarim
Président de la République
BP 521, Moroni, Comoros

Telegrams: President, Moroni, Comoros

Telexes: 233 PRESIREP KO

Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

Fax: + 269 74 48 21

2. Minister of Justice

Ali Hassanali
Ministre de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux et administration pénitentiaire
Ministère de la Justice
Moroni, Comoros

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Moroni, Comoros

Telexes: 219 MAERFIC KO

Salutation: Madame le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Prime Minister

Ahmed Abdou
Premier Ministre du gouvernement
BP 521, Moroni, Comoros

Fax: + 269 74 48 28

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Mouthar Ahmed Charif
Ministre des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération
Ministère des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération
Moroni, Comoros

Fax: 00 269 74 41 11

Ministry of Defence

Colonel Moilimou Djoussouf
Chef d'état major des Forces Unifiées de Sécurité
Moroni, Comoros

Ministry of Interior

M. Assoumany Said Mwigny
Directeur de la Sûreté Nationale
Moroni, Comoros

and to diplomatic representatives of Comoros accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 May 1997.