

EXTERNAL

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Extrajudicial executions
Fear of further extrajudicial executions

8 September 1997

COMOROS Scores of people killed in Anjouan

Scores of people have been killed and many others wounded on the Indian Ocean island of Anjouan between 3 and 5 September 1997. The killings took place in Mirontsy and the port of Mutsamudu during clashes between government troops and armed secessionist groups. The exact number of people killed is not yet known. There are fears that armed conflict could spread to the town of Sima, also on Anjouan, and to the island of Grand Comore, and that more unarmed civilians could be extrajudicially executed.

300 troops, sent by President Taki to crush the resistance movement of the Anjouanais, arrived on the island on the evening of 3 September. Civilians were reportedly shot dead indiscriminately. The victims included unarmed civilians, members of government forces, and members of Anjouanais armed groups.

Government troops injured in the clashes were allegedly evacuated to the island of Moheli for medical treatment. Wounded civilians were not evacuated or given medical assistance. As of 5 September, humanitarian organizations were still being denied access to the wounded.

Air flights and telephone communications with the island have been suspended. Local sources allege that these links were deliberately cut.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Comoros are composed of three islands: Grand Comore, Anjouan and Moheli. Tension has been growing on Anjouan and Moheli since 14 July, when the two islands declared their independence from the island of Grand Comore and the government of Comoros, in favour of closer ties with France, the former colonial power. The recent clashes on Anjouan have taken place during attempts by the government of President Taki to silence the two islands' claims of independence.

In mid-August 1997, the Organization of African Unity (OAU) sent a representative to the Comoros, Pierre Yéré from Côte d'Ivoire, to try to seek a peaceful solution to the conflict.

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

- expressing deep concern that scores of people have reportedly been killed on Anjouan since 3 September;
- appealing to the authorities to issue strict instructions to the security forces that unarmed civilians should not be targeted;
- seeking assurances that the government will immediately take steps to prevent any further extrajudicial executions of civilians by the army;
- seeking assurances that civilians injured during the clashes are provided with immediate medical assistance.

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. Prime Minister

Ahmed Abdou
Premier Ministre
BP 521, MORONI, Comoros
Telegrams: Premier Ministre, Moroni, Comoros
Fax: + 269 74 48 28
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Prime Minister

3. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation

Mouthar Ahmed Charif
Ministre des Affaires étrangères
et de la Coopération
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
MORONI, Comoros
Telegrams: Ministre Affaires Étrangères, Moroni, Comoros
Fax: + 269 74 41 11
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

4. Minister of Defense

Délégué à la défense
M. Houmadi Mgonri
Ministère de la défense
MORONI, Comoros
Telegrams: Ministre Défense, Moroni, Comoros
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Ministry of Interior
M. Achiraf Said Hachim
Ministre de l'Interieur
et de la Décentralisation
Ministère de l'Interieur
MORONI, Comoros

and to diplomatic representatives of COMOROS accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 October 1997.