

ZAIRE

On 6 March 1996, around a dozen members of the security forces attacked a meeting of opposition parliamentarians held in the country's parliament building, the Palais du peuple. They threw grenades, destroyed papers and smashed furniture. Several parliamentarians were ordered to strip naked and others were kicked and beaten with rifle butts and batons.

Marie-Ange Lukiana Mufwankolo, a parliamentarian representing women's organizations and a member of the main opposition party, the Union for Democracy and Social Progress, was beaten on her back with cordelettes (belts worn by the Zairian military), before her attacker stamped on her right forearm, breaking the bone in several places. Dozens of other parliamentarians suffered similar beatings, and at least two sustained bayonet wounds.

Marie-Ange Lukiana Mufwankolo and others made a formal complaint to the High Court in Kinshasa, but by the end of 1996 no inquiry into the attack had occurred and those responsible continued to enjoy impunity. Those who spoke out against the attack have received death threats.

+Please write, urging an independent and impartial inquiry into the attack, calling for those responsible to be brought to justice, and for all those who sustained injuries, including Ange-Marie Lukiana Mugwankolo, to be compensated, to: Monsieur Gérard Kamanda wa Kamanda/ Ministre de l'Intérieur/ Hôtel du Conseil exécutif/ Kinshasa-Gombe/ Zaire. Fax: +243 88 42062; send copies of your letters to: Monsieur Joseph Nsinga Udju/ Ministre de la Justice et Garde des Sceaux/ Ministère de la Justice/ BP 3137/ Kinshasa-Gombe/ Zaire. Fax: +243 88 43778.

CUBA

Prisoner of conscience Francisco Chaviano González has been imprisoned since May 1994 and is currently held in Combinado del Este Prison. He was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment in April 1995 on charges of "revealing state security secrets", "revealing administrative secrets", and "falsifying public documents". He was tried before a military court because two other defendants were state security agents.

AI believes that the real reason for Francisco Chaviano's arrest and imprisonment was his activities as President of the unofficial National Council for Civil Rights in Cuba (CNDCC). Moments before his arrest, someone reportedly handed him a compromising document which was used by state security agents as a pretext for detaining him. During the trial, a lawyer for another defendant demanded to see the document, but was refused as it was "secret", even though it was used as evidence. In a letter smuggled out of prison, Francisco Chaviano alleged that on the morning of the trial his food had been drugged, making it hard for him to address the court.

The activities of the CNDCC include research into people who have gone missing at sea while trying to leave Cuba. Francisco Chaviano had himself spent a year in prison after trying to leave Cuba by boat in March 1989. He was subsequently persistently harassed and repeatedly urged to leave the country under threat of further imprisonment. In March 1994, he was physically assaulted in his home by four armed men in plain clothes, believed to be state security agents. Although he reported the assault, the police failed to investigate it.

+Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Francisco Chaviano González, to:

Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz/ President of the Councils of State and Ministers/ Havana/ Cuba. Fax: +53 7 333085.

MYANMAR

Daw Aye Aye Win, Daw Thein Kywe and Daw Khin Aye Kyu are three women imprisoned for their political beliefs. Little is known about them individually. All they have in common is their support for the National League for Democracy (NLD), the main opposition party founded by Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; and the fact that they are each detained as prisoners of conscience for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and association. All three women were arrested during the crack-down on the NLD in 1996.

Daw Aye Aye Win was arrested at her home in Tharketa, east of Yangon, on 30 June. Forty audio-cassette tapes of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches and NLD papers were confiscated by security officials. She was brought to trial on 16 August and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

Daw Thein Kywe was arrested at her home in Yangon on 12 August. Security officials removed two audio-cassette tapes of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speeches and her hat, known as a "kamaw". The "kamaw" was the symbol of the NLD during the 1990 elections. Before her arrest Daw Thein Kywe regularly attended the NLD weekend gatherings with thousands of others outside the compound of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. She has been sentenced to seven years' imprisonment.

Daw Khin Aye Kyu was arrested at her home in Pazundaung, Yangon, on 20 September. She is the official NLD photographer. During the raid on her home, the security forces confiscated videotapes and a video recorder. At last report she was awaiting trial on charges under the Video Act.

Like all political prisoners in Myanmar, all three women face the risk of ill-treatment or torture in detention. AI is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

+Please write, calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Daw Aye Aye Win, Daw Thein

Kywe and Daw Khin Aye Kyu, to:

General Than Shwe/ Chairman/ State Law and Order Restoration Council/ c/o Director of Defence Services Intelligence/ Ministry of Defence/ Signal Pagoda Road/ Dagon Post Office/ Yangon/ Union of Myanmar. Telex: 21316.