
AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 121/93

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Iran - 3 November (international)

****Venezuela - 10 November (international, linked to EJEs & Disappearances)**

Please note: The document on summary executions and EJEs to go with this news release is shortly being sent out in a Weekly Mailing. It has only been dated November - but is EMBARGOED FOR 10 NOVEMBER. Please make sure that everyone in the section knows this.

Papua New Guinea - 19 November (targeted)

AI INDEX: AFR 57/WU 03/93
EMBARGOED FOR 5 OCTOBER 1993

TOGO: MASSIVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS CONTINUING DESPITE POLITICAL REFORM

Massive human rights violations have been committed by security forces in Togo over the past year, with dozens extrajudicially executed and hundreds arbitrarily arrested and tortured, resulting in more than a quarter of a million Togolese seeking refuge in neighbouring countries.

Despite the long-postponed presidential election finally taking place in Togo a little over a month ago, human rights violations have continued to occur. President Gnassingbé Eyadéma, in power since 1967 and re-elected on 25 August 1993 despite an election boycott by main candidates, large-scale abstentions and widely acknowledged fraudulent practice, has continuously failed to take action to curb human rights abuse or bring soldiers responsible for illegal killings to justice.

"This year was supposed to see the climax of a period of political reform which started in 1991 with the holding of a National Conference, following demonstrations against the one-party state," said Amnesty International. "Instead, the complete failure of the authorities to hold the armed forces to account for killings, torture and arbitrary arrests, both before and after the reforms started, has meant that Togo's population is quite unable to exercise basic civil and political rights."

In January this year, peaceful demonstrators were shot down as French and German government ministers visited Togo to seek a political settlement. After an unsuccessful attack - possibly a coup attempt - in March, several dozen people were taken prisoner and executed extrajudicially. Most recently, the day after the presidential election, while foreign military observers were still present, the army, which was supposed to be confined to barracks, assisted in the arrest of some 40 suspected opposition supporters - 21 of whom then died in custody. The authorities have not conducted an independent investigation of these deaths in custody, but claim 15 of those who died were poisoned by food allegedly brought to them by their own supporters. Other evidence suggests that they died after being beaten up and packed into a small cell.

During 1992, there were attempts on the life of two opposition leaders, for which members of the security forces appear to have been responsible. In May Gilchrist Olympio, son of the late Sylvanus Olympio, the former President of the Republic who had been assassinated by the military in 1963, was attacked and seriously injured while on his way to a political meeting. Four people, including Dr Marc Atipede, leader of another political party, were killed during this attack. Although he recovered from the injuries, Gilchrist Olympio was barred from standing in the August 1993 presidential election on the grounds that his medical certificate was not in order. Tavio Amorin who was chairman of the legislature's Committee of Political Affairs and Human Rights and Liberties and secretary of a new opposition coalition was assassinated in July 1992.

At this time of political change - legislative elections are due to take place before the end of 1993 - Amnesty International is appealing to President Eyadéma to embark on human rights reforms and to ensure the Togolese authorities organize thorough and independent investigations into all reports of human rights violations, with those responsible being brought to justice.

"Without thorough investigations and the prosecution of those found responsible, the current cycle of violence will continue to generate yet more human rights violations" said Amnesty International.

Amnesty International is also urging other governments and the international community as a whole to make every effort to support measures to ensure that these important reforms are implemented. Amnesty International is urging the governments of France and other countries to take into account the potential impact on human rights of any renewal of military assistance - Germany and the

United States cut off military assistance in 1991 and France did so in October 1992 - particularly in the absence of lasting measures to end the army's long-term, record of massive human rights violations.

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AI INDEX: AFR 23/WU 01/93
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DJIBOUTI: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL URGES INQUIRY INTO KILLINGS AND OTHER ARMY ABUSES AND CALLS FOR RELEASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST WHO EXPOSED THEM

Dozens have been summarily executed, over 100 arbitrarily detained and many subjected to torture, including rape, by the Djibouti security forces in the past two months in violent reprisals against suspected civilian supporters of an armed opposition group.

The *Front pour la restauration de l'unité et de la démocratie* (FRUD), Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy, has been fighting the government in the north and southwest of the country since 1991. In July 1993, after a long period of virtual cease-fire when peace talks continued under French government mediation, government forces launched a new offensive and recaptured some northern towns and villages, although the FRUD still claims to control rural areas. Fighting escalated in late August 1993, when President Hassan Gouled Aptidon visited France for talks with the French government, which provides military aid to Djibouti.

Women and men from the north, who belong to the Afar ethnic group from which the FRUD derives most of its support, have been victims of gross human rights abuses. Among dozens who have been summarily executed by the security forces, Amnesty International has confirmed the killings of Kamil Mohamed Souleh, a postal worker, and Abakari Gadito in Randa town on 5 September. The names of several women who were victims of rape are being withheld for fear of reprisals.

More than 100 men, including possible prisoners of conscience, have been detained illegally and incommunicado in military camps, and there have been claims of torture and ill-treatment. Amnesty International has received testimonies of prisoners being beaten while tied in contorted positions and denied food for days at a time. Thousands of Afars have fled to Ethiopia as a result of government attacks and reprisals for FRUD killings of government soldiers and because of food shortages due to the disruption of food supplies to Afar areas.

Kamil Souleh's brother, Mohamed Houmed Souleh, a leading human rights activist and President of the *Association pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés* (ADDHL), Association for the defence of human rights and liberties, which had exposed the atrocities in the north, was arrested in the capital, Djibouti, on 14 September, while attending his brother's funeral. He has been charged with defaming the army and publishing false information.

Mohamed Houmed Souleh, a former member of parliament, has been detained as a prisoner of conscience several times before and was once tortured in prison on account of his criticisms of the government and of human rights violations. He formed the ADDHL in 1991 and is himself a member of the Afar ethnic group. Amnesty International is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

Amnesty International is calling for all reports of arbitrary killings, rapes, torture and other ill-treatment by the security forces to be independently and impartially investigated and for the results to be made public. Amnesty International is also calling for the immediate release of all those illegally detained or for them to be charged with recognizably criminal offences and promptly brought to trial.

Djibouti's Minister of the Interior has issued a general denial of the reports of human rights violations publicized by Amnesty International, describing them as "baseless" and "a campaign of disinformation designed to destabilize Djibouti". Amnesty International considers this response to be totally unsatisfactory; it evades the major issues, as the evidence of major army abuses is strong enough to require an urgent independent investigation.

DEATH OF A LONG-TERM PRISONER OF CONSCIENCE

Mohamed Hassanley Abakari, a 55-year old prisoner of conscience who was an army lieutenant, died in hospital on 28 August after surgery. He was serving a 10-year prison sentence imposed after a grossly unfair trial. He was among 14 Afar opponents of the government, including former Head of Government Ali Aref, who were arrested in January 1991 and convicted in July 1992 by a special security court for an alleged conspiracy to overthrow the government. In June 1993 the appeal court rejected their appeal. Amnesty International is calling for a public inquest into the death and is renewing its appeals for the release of Ali Aref and the remaining prisoners of conscience.

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