

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Torture and legal concern

22 December 1992

EQUATORIAL GUINEA: Over 100 people including  
Celestino Bacale )

Pedro Esono )

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Maximio Miko ) teachers  
Arsenio Moro )  
Angel Obama )

Amnesty International is concerned at the arrest of over 100 people during a reportedly peaceful demonstration in Malabo, the capital, on 17 December 1992. The organization is also concerned at reports that some of them may have been subjected to torture during detention and fears that those who are still detained may be at risk of further torture.

Over 100 people, mainly teachers and students, but also priests and members of opposition parties, were arrested during a demonstration calling for the release of Celestino Bacale, a teacher in the Rey Malabo Institute of Education, who was detained on 10 December 1992. Police broke up the demonstration, using a great deal of violence, after some demonstrators caused a disturbance by shouting at market traders. Other people who had taken no part in the demonstration were among those arrested.

Celestino Bacale is reported to be seriously ill as a result of torture. Many of the demonstrators are also reported to have been badly beaten.

Celestino Bacale, who is a member of the Convergencia para la Democracia Social (CPDS), Convergence for Social Democracy, had been arrested previously in April 1992 on account of his non-violent political activities and was held for over a month before being released. He was again briefly detained and beaten in November 1992. The reasons for his arrest on 10 December are not clear but he appears again to have been detained for political reasons.

On 21 December, following protests from foreign governments at the latest arrests, two priests and about 10 members of opposition parties were released. However, Celestino Bacale, other teachers, including the four named above, and many students remain in custody where many are reportedly being subjected to torture - one of those released told how he heard the cries of detainees being beaten as he was leaving the prison. He and others had been subjected to repeated beatings, one of which consisted of 50 blows on the sole of each foot.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Police similarly used considerable violence to break up a student demonstration in Bata on 24 November 1992. Forty students were arrested and all were reported to have

been tortured, some of them severely.

Equatorial Guinea introduced a multi-party political system in January 1992 when laws permitting political parties and freedom of assembly and demonstration were passed. Previously the only party allowed was the ruling Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial (PDGE), Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea. Under the law on freedom of assembly, official permission is required for any gathering of over 10 people and the organizers of the gatherings or demonstrations can be imprisoned for crimes committed by other participants. Despite the passage of these laws, throughout 1992 scores of people have been briefly detained in Equatorial Guinea for taking part in political meetings and in demonstrations.

**Page 2 of UA 409/92**

Equatorial Guinea became party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1986 and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1987.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/airmail letters either in Spanish, English or in your own language:**

- expressing concern that those named above and about 100 others were arrested on 17 December 1992, during a reportedly peaceful demonstration and thus for exercising their right to freedom of association guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 13 (k) of Equatorial Guinea's new Constitution;
- also expressing concern at the reported arrest and torture of Celestino Bacale;
- expressing concern at reports that those arrested on 17 December have been subjected to torture and that they are at risk of being subjected to further torture;
- urging that they immediately be allowed to receive visits from relatives and medical personnel and calling also for their physical state and conditions of detention to be examined by independent officials, such as judges or a special commission of inquiry;
- urging that if, as it appears, they are detained for their peaceful political activities, they be released immediately and unconditionally.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President:

Su Excelencia

General de Brigada Teodoro Obiang Nguema

Presidente de la República

Gabinete del Presidente de la República

Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

**Telegrams: Presidente Obiang Nguema, Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial**

**Salutation: Su Excelencia / Your Excellency**

2) Minister of Justice and Religion:

Su Excelencia

Mariano Nsué Nguema

Ministro de Justicia y Culto

Ministerio de Justicia y Culto

Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

**Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia Nsué Nguema,, Malabo, República de Guinea  
Ecuatorial**

**Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG**

**Salutation: Su Excelencia / Your Excellency**

3) Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Su Excelencia

Benjamín Mba Ekua Mikó

Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores

Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores

Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

**Telegrams: Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores Mba Ekua Malabo, República de Guinea  
Ecuatorial**

**Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG**

**Salutation: Su Excelencia / Your Excellency**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:** diplomatic representatives of Equatorial Guinea accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 February 1993.