

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial execution

30 July 1992

TOGO: Tavio Amarin, aged 34, leading member of coalition of opposition parties

Tavio Amarin was shot while out walking after a meeting with opposition groups in the capital, Lomé, on 23 July 1992. On 29 July he died of his wounds in a Paris hospital. He had reportedly been shot by two people in civilian clothes firing an automatic weapon, and the government has stated that a police identity card was found near to the scene of the shooting. A few days previously, on 18 July, the Collectif de l'Opposition Démocratique, COD-II, Confederation of the Democratic Opposition, had been created as an alliance of several opposition political parties including the Parti Socialiste Panafricain (PSP), Panafrican Socialist Party, led by Tavio Amarin, who was elected as Secretary General of COD-II. He was also President of the Comission des affaires politiques, des droits de l'homme et des libertés du Haut Conseil de la République, Head of commission for political affairs, human rights and freedoms in Togo's transitional parliamentary body. The transitional government has opened a judicial inquiry into the shooting.

Amnesty International is concerned that Tavio Amarin's assassination may have been carried out with the direct or indirect complicity of the Togolese security forces.

In May 1992 another leading opposition figure, Gilchrist Olympio, was seriously injured and four others killed after his motorcade was ambushed by plainclothes gunmen in northern Togo where he was attending a political rally. He is still in Paris convalescing from his injuries. Gilchrist Olympio is president of the Union des Forces de Changement (UFC), a coalition of 10 opposition political parties, and the son of Togo's first Head of State who was assassinated in 1967 by a group of soldiers led by the current President, General Gnassingbé Eyadéma.

Amnesty International is urging the Togolese authorities to investigate the circumstances of Tavio Amarin's death and allegations that the army was responsible for the attack on Gilchrist Olympio, to take all necessary steps to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice without delay and also to protect other opposition political leaders from similar attacks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

An inquiry carried out in June 1992 by a human rights organization into the assassination attempt on Gilchrist Olympio concluded that the army probably planned and carried out the attack with the complicity of the highest levels of the army command. The inquiry was requested by the Ligue togolaise des droits de l'Homme (LTDH), Togolese League for Human Rights, and carried out by the Paris-based Fédération International des Droits de l'homme (FIDH), International Federation of Human Rights. Three representatives of this non-governmental organization visited Togo and interviewed many witnesses. The FIDH observed in its conclusions that the President's son, Captain Ernest Gnassingbé, was seen in the area of the assassination attempt immediately before it occurred and the FIDH delegation concluded that he was acting with autonomy which led to *activisme incompatible avec son statut militaire*, a "level of activity incompatible with his military status", suggesting he may have been involved in planning the assassination. The report concludes that the behaviour of

the armed forces demonstrates that soldiers know they enjoy *quasi impunité*, "quasi-impunity" against prosecution. The army has rejected all the commission's conclusions as a "tissue of lies".

After months of violent confrontations between the security forces and opponents of one-party rule, President Eyadéma and his government agreed to introduce a multi-party political system and hold a National Conference which ran from July to August 1991. It examined human rights violations since President Eyadéma came to power in 1967 and elected Joseph Kokou Koffigoh as Prime Minister, who

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nominated a transitional government to run the country until elections scheduled for early 1992, with President Eyadéma remaining as Head of State during this transitional period. The National Conference nominated a body to oversee the transition and to vote on legislation, known as the Haut Conseil de la République, High Council of the Republic.

Both during the National Conference and subsequently, the army has tried to halt the process of reform, and on at least two occasions Prime Minister Koffigoh has been threatened. Although the National Conference provided for power to be in the hands of the government rather than the President, in practice there is rivalry between the two, with the President retaining control over the armed forces. As a result of the increasing instability, including violence between different ethnic groups, elections have been postponed. The date of 23 August 1992 has been set for a referendum on a new multi-party constitution, but no date has been set for elections.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- calling upon the authorities to urgently investigate the circumstances surrounding the death of Tavio Amarin to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice without delay;
- expressing concern that the findings of an independent inquiry into the attempted assassination of Gilchrist Olympio and the killing of four others suggest that the army was responsible and urging that any member of the armed forces suspected of direct or indirect involvement in either these killings or the death of Tavio Amarin be immediately suspended from duty and brought to justice without delay;
- urging the authorities to ensure that all members of the army and other branches of the security forces receive clear orders stating that it is not only a punishable offence to take part in political assassinations or other similar killings, but that they also have the right and the duty to defy any orders authorizing or inciting them to carry out such killings.

APPEALS TO:

1. President

Son Excellence Monsieur le Général
Gnassingbé Eyadéma
Président de la République
Palais présidentiel
Avenue de la Marina
Lomé, Togo

Lomé, Togo

Salutation: Monsieur le Chef

d'Etat-Major / Dear Chief of Army Staff

**Telegrams: President de la
Republique, Lome, Togo**

Telexes: 5139; 5419; 5201 TMS THG

**Salutation: Monsieur le président / Dear
President**

2. Chief of Army Staff

Chef d'Etat-major général
Camp militaire Tokoin
Boulevard des Armées
Lomé, Togo

Telegrams: Chef d'Etat-Major General,

3. Minister of Justice

Monsieur Alfred Koami Kouma Tordjo
Ministre de la Justice et Garde des
Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
Angle Avenue de la Marina
Rue Colonel de Roux
LOME, Togo

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice,
Lome, Togo**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear
Minister**

4. Prime Minister and Minister of
Defence

Monsieur Joseph Kokou Koffigoh
Premier Ministre, Ministre de la
Défense, La Primature
LOME, Togo

**Telegrams: Premier Ministre Joseph
Koffigoh, Lome, Togo**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Premier
Ministre / Dear Prime Minister**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister for Human Rights
Monsieur Djovi Gally
Ministre des droits de l'homme
Ministère des droits de l'homme
LOME, Togo

Newspaper Editor
Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-chef
Courrier du Golfe
Koffi Kpé Homawo
BP 660, Lomé, Togo

Newspaper Editor
Monsieur le Rédacteur-en-chef
Forum Hebdo
63 Rue Tamakloe
(Angle Avenue François Mitterrand)
BP 3681, LOME, Togo

and to diplomatic representatives of Togo accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 September 1992.