SOMALIA: Mohamed Sheikh Sharawe, aged 60, mayor of Bulu Burti
Mohamed Hassan Hawadleh, aged 65, former member of parliament
and former mayor of Bulu Burti
Haji Kabaweyne, aged 80, clan elder and muezzin of mosque
Sheikh Mohamed Balad, aged 70, Islamic judge (Khadi)
and many others

Some 50 unarmed civilians are reported to have been executed extra-judicially on 12 November 1990 by soldiers of the 77th battalion from Mogadishu, known as "red berets", in the town of Bulu Burti, 200 kilometres north of Mogadishu. Some were killed at their homes, which were then set on fire, others inside the mosque, and others in the main street of the town. Those executed included prominent local people, including elected officials, Islamic leaders, clan elders and government employees.

The killings are believed to have been a reprisal for an ambush in a nearby village of government troops by opposition guerrillas of the United Somali Congress (USC), when some government soldiers were killed. The USC draws its support from members of the Hawiye clan from this and other regions in central parts of southern Somalia. A pattern has developed here, as previously in the northwest, of arbitrary reprisals by the security forces against local clan members after rebel attacks.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Other recent incidents of extrajudicial executions of civilians by government soldiers in recent months include the killing of 17 people in the northern port of Berbera on 16 August 1990, two of whom were employees of an international relief organization and another was a former UN High Commission for Refugees employee. On 14 October in Baidowa, 225 kilometres northwest of Mogadishu, dozens of people were reportedly shot dead by soldiers when they demonstrated against President Mohamed Siad Barre during an official visit there. In Mogadishu on 23 October in demonstrations demanding the release of political prisoners, at least five but probably many more people were killed by "red beret" soldiers.

The government faces armed opposition from rebel movements in the northwest, central and southwestern regions of the country. During 1990 there have been frequent reports of killings of civilians by government troops in these areas of fighting, as well as some killings of government supporters by opposition fighters. Reprisal killings are a violation of the Geneva Conventions and international human rights standards, including those to which Somalia committed itself by acceding to the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights in January 1990.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at reports of extrajudicial executions in Bulu Burti by soldiers on 12 November, citing the individual victims named above;

- calling for an independent investigation into the killings in Bulu Burti, which would report its findings publicly and make recommendations on actions
to be taken to punish those responsible and to prevent further killings from occurring in similar circumstances;

- urging the government and military authorities to state publicly that reprisal killings of civilians and other killings of prisoners or unarmed civilians by soldiers are crimes which will not be condoned and will be severely punished in all cases.
APPEALS TO:

His Excellency
President Mohamed Siad Barre
President of the Somali Democratic Republic
Villa Somalia
Mogadishu, Somalia

Telegrams: President Siad Barre, Mogadishu, Somalia
Telexes: 639 MOG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Brigadier General Mohamed Saeed Hersi ("Morgan")
Minister of Defence and Army Chief of Staff
Ministry of Defence
Mogadishu, Somalia

Telegrams: Defence Minister, Mogadishu, Somalia
Telexes: 3726 MINDIF SM

COPIES TO:

Dr Mohamed Omar Farah
Attorney General
Attorney General's Chambers
PO Box 1745
Mogadishu, Somalia

Colonel Dr Ali Abdurahman
Attorney General of the Supreme Military Court
Ministry of Defence
PO Box 1505
Mogadishu, Somalia

His Excellency Mohamed Ali Samatar
First Vice President
The Presidency
Mogadishu, Somalia

Mr Ahmed Mohamed Aden
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Mogadishu, Somalia

and to diplomatic representatives of Somalia in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 January 1991.