

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 24/007/2005

12 April 2005

UA 84/05

Denial of food/medical concern/torture

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

About 70 inmates at Black Beach prison

About 70 of the people held at Black Beach prison, in the capital, Malabo, are at risk of death from starvation and denial of medical treatment. Among them are scores of political detainees held without charge or trial, and 11 foreign nationals sentenced to long prison terms after an unfair trial.

The present crackdown apparently began in late February 2005, when the director of national security discovered that the prison administrator was illegally using prisoners as unpaid construction workers. He found two prisoners on their way to work, and they have since been held at the main police station, where they may have been tortured. The prison administrator has been dismissed, but since late February all prisoners have been held incommunicado, and they are not allowed to leave their cells.

The prisoners normally rely on their families to bring them food, which they now have to hand over to the soldiers who guard the prison. However, the foreign nationals and dozens of Equatorial Guinean political detainees do not have families in Malabo to support them. Malabo is on the island of Bioko, some 500km from the mainland where most prisoners were arrested.

In December 2004 the authorities reportedly reduced the daily food ration from a cup of rice to one or two bread rolls. However, even the provision of these has become sporadic during the present clampdown, and at times the prisoners have gone without food for several days.

Many of the prisoners are weak because of the torture or ill-treatment they have been subjected to and because of chronic illnesses for which they have not received adequate treatment. The 11 foreign nationals (six Armenians and five South Africans) were among a group convicted of attempting to overthrow the government (see UA 116/04, AFR 24/003/2004, 19 March 2004, and follow-up). They have been kept with their hands and legs cuffed 24 hours a day since they were arrested in March 2004. This constitutes torture; leg-irons are prohibited under international law.

Four Nigerian nationals have been held at Black Beach prison for several months without charge of trial and without their embassy being notified of their imprisonment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Spanish or your own language:

- calling on the authorities to immediately provide regular and adequate food rations to all those held in Black Beach prison;
- asking them to provide medical treatment to all prisoners who need it;
- urging the authorities to remove immediately the handcuffs and leg irons from the foreign prisoners;
- pointing out that the use of leg irons is forbidden by international law and that the use of handcuffs is permitted only in specific circumstances such as for transportation of prisoners or to restrain prisoners when other means have failed;
- calling on the authorities to end the incommunicado detention of these prisoners and to allow them immediate access to their families, lawyers, consular staff where appropriate, and to international humanitarian organizations such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

APPEALS TO:President

General Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo
Presidente de la República
Gabinete del Presidente de la República
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Fax: +240 09 3313

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Salutation: Excelencia/Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Sr. Don Angel Masié Mibuy
Ministro de Justicia y Culto
Ministerio de Justicia y Culto
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Fax: +240 09 2126

Salutation: Sr. Ministro/Dear Minister

Attorney General

Sr. Don José Oló Obono
Fiscal General de la República
Fiscalía General de la República
Malabo, Equatorial Guinea

Fax: +240 09 1338

Salutation: Sr Fiscal/ Dear Attorney General

COPIES TO:Minister of Foreign Affairs

Sr Don Pastor Micha Ondo Bile
Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores
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President of the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission

Sr Don Salomón Nguema Owono
Presidente de la Cámara de Representantes del Pueblo y de la
Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la Cámara de Representantes del Pueblo
Cámar de Representantes del Pueblo
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and 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 24 May 2005.