

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 31/005/2005

06 April 2005

Further Information on UA 65/05 (AFR 31/002/2005, 15 March 2005) - Fear of torture or ill-treatment/incommunicado detention

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

**Brian Hamish Sands (m), New Zealand national
35 Ivorian alleged militiamen**

Brian Hamish Sands died on 5 April, in the custody of the armed opposition group *Forces Nouvelles* (FN), New Forces, who control the northern part of Côte d'Ivoire. They had arrested him on 11 March as a suspected mercenary.

On 1 April the FN had transferred him from the city of Bouaké, their stronghold in the centre of the country, to Korhogo, the main city in the north. The FN have said that they found his body in his cell and that "apparently the death was of natural causes". The New Zealand authorities asked for an immediate autopsy. Other reports indicated that Sands might have committed suicide. His family had reportedly said that he had mental health problems but was not suicidal.

The 35 alleged militiamen who were also arrested in March were transferred on the same day to Korhogo, where they are allegedly still held incommunicado.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) were given access all 36 detainees while they were held in Bouaké, but were reportedly denied access to them after they were moved to Korhogo, despite official requests by the ICRC.

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

- calling for the UNOCI to be allowed to conduct an immediate autopsy of the body of Brian Hamish Sands, and for the results to be made public;
- asking the FN authorities whether they provided Brian Hamish Sands with adequate medical treatment while he was imprisoned in Korhogo, and asking precisely what medical attention they provided to him;
- expressing concern for the safety of the 35 alleged pro-government militiamen arrested by the *Forces Nouvelles* who are reportedly held incommunicado in Korhogo, where they are at risk of torture, and urging the FN authorities to give them any medical attention they may need, and access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI) and their families;
- urging the *Forces Nouvelles* officials to give clear assurances that the detainees will not be tortured or ill-treated and that their prison conditions are consistent with international standards on detention.

APPEALS TO:

Guillaume Soro
Secretary general of the *Forces Nouvelles*
Bouaké
Côte d'Ivoire

Fax: + 225 31 63 22 84
Email: mopaci@hotmail.com
Salutation: Dear Sir

Sidiki Konaté
Spokesman of the *Forces Nouvelles*
Bouaké
Côte d'Ivoire

Fax: + 225 31 63 22 84
Email: mopaci@hotmail.com
Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Côte d'Ivoire accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 May 2005.