

29 July 1999

Further information on UA 128/99 (AFR 17/07/99, 2 June 1999) - Fear for safety

**CAMEROON** Abdoulaye Math, President of the *Mouvement pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés* (MDDHL), Movement for the Defence of Human Rights and Liberties

**Semdi Soulaye** (note corrected spelling), also working for the MDDHL

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Human rights defenders Abdoulaye Math and Semdi Soulaye returned to Maroua on 13 June 1999. Since their return they are not known to have been threatened or harassed by the security forces. It appears that appeals to the authorities on their behalf may have provided some protection. Amnesty International continues to monitor their situation closely.

The two men had fled to the capital, Yaoundé, after members of the *brigade anti-gang* came to their homes in Maroua, Far-North Province, in late May 1998, while they were away, and threatened Abdoulaye Math's family at gunpoint.

The *brigade anti-gang*, a special unit of the military and gendarmerie, was first deployed in March 1998 to combat a long-standing problem of armed robbery in the north of Cameroon. Since then its members have been responsible for the extrajudicial executions of scores of suspected armed robbers, known as *coupeurs de route*. (For further information, see *Cameroon: Extrajudicial executions in North and Far-North Provinces*, AI Index: AFR 17/16/98, December 1998.)

Abdoulaye Math is the president of a non-governmental human rights organization, the *Mouvement pour la défense des droits de l'homme et des libertés* (MDDHL), Movement for the Defence of Human Rights and Liberties. Semdi Soulaye also works for the MDDHL. The threats and harassment against them are believed to have been linked to the work of the MDDHL in investigating and exposing extrajudicial executions by the *brigade anti-gang*. Abdoulaye Math's home had been searched twice while he was absent in December 1998. In early May 1999 the *brigade anti-gang* had threatened MDDHL members who were investigating possible extrajudicial executions. There were also reports that Abdoulaye Math and Semdi Soulaye were being sought because of a meeting they had had with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on torture who visited Cameroon in May 1999.

A photographer, Alioum Aminou, who had documented apparent extrajudicial executions by the *brigade anti-gang*, was arrested in October 1998 and has not been seen since; he is feared dead. There has been no official investigation into the scores of extrajudicial executions of criminal suspects by the *brigade anti-gang* which have taken place since March 1998.

**Many thanks to all who sent appeals. Participants who wish to do so may send a final round of telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in French, English or your own language:**

- referring to the threats in late May 1999 by the *brigade anti-gang* against Abdoulaye Math and Semdi Soulaye in Maroua and urging that all those seeking to defend human rights be allowed to carry out their activities freely and without threats to their personal safety.

**APPEALS TO:**

Minister of State for Defence

M. Amadou Ali

Ministre d'Etat délégué à la Présidence chargé de la Défense

Palais de la Présidence

1000 Yaoundé

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**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre d'Etat/Dear Minister of State**

Head of National Security

M. Luc René Bell

Délégué général à la Sûreté nationale

Sûreté nationale

1000 Yaoundé

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**Salutation: Monsieur le Délégué général/Dear Mr Bell**

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*Le Messenger* (newspaper), **fax: + 237 42 02 14**

*Cameroon Tribune* (newspaper), **fax: + 237 30 43 62**

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 September 1999.