

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 285/92 Arrest of possible prisoners of conscience/
Torture

10 September 1992

EQUATORIAL GUINEA: Tomás Buehecu

Julio Esono

Pedro Luis Moto, a minor

Felipe Ndong

Pablo Ndong

Gerardo Ngue

Guadalupe Ngue, female

and 16 others, including another woman

Amnesty International has learned that 24 members of the Partido del Progreso de Guinea Ecuatorial, (PPGE), Equatorial Guinea Progress Party were arrested in Malabo, the capital, between 1 and 3 September 1992. One of those arrested, Severo Moto Nsá, the leader of the party, was subsequently released after being questioned for several hours. Amnesty International is concerned that they appear to be prisoners of conscience arrested and imprisoned solely on account of their membership of a non-violent political party. The organization is also concerned by reports that they were beaten at the time of their arrest and were tortured or ill-treated in custody.

According to reports, the seven people named above were arrested on 1 September 1992 and taken to Black Beach prison in Malabo while the other 16 were arrested between 1 and 3 September and are being held at the Dirección Nacional de Seguridad, Directorate of National Security. All those detained were reportedly tortured either at the Directorate of National Security or at Black Beach prison. Some are said to have sustained serious injuries but have not received medical treatment. One of those arrested is a minor and is the youngest brother of the leader of the party, Severo Moto Nsá.

Sources close to the Progress Party said that the arrests followed an incident on 1 September when a young man, whom they believed to have links with the security forces, entered the party's office saying he wanted to buy the party's newspaper. The man suddenly began to scream and about 20 policemen arrived immediately and then beat and arrested all those present except the young man. The police ransacked the office and took away files containing the names and other details of PPGE members.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Equatorial Guinea became a multi-party state in January 1992 when a law permitting political parties was passed. Until then the only party allowed was the ruling Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial (PDGE), Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea. The Progress Party began operating openly in Equatorial Guinea following the introduction of the multi-party political system. It was founded by Equatorial Guinean exiles in Spain and is currently seeking official recognition in Equatorial Guinea. Owing to the stringent requirements for official recognition,

which include paying a fee equivalent to approximately US\$ 165,000, two thousand times the average yearly salary, only four parties have so far been able to obtain recognition. Despite the introduction of a multi-party political system, throughout 1992 scores of people have been briefly detained in Equatorial Guinea for supporting opposition parties. The Progress Party previously attempted to obtain recognition in 1988, with the result that about 40 members of the party were arrested, nine of whom were unfairly tried and convicted - two received death sentences, which were subsequently commuted, and others were given prison terms. They were all released by January 1992.

page 2 of UA 285/92...

Equatorial Guinea became party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1986 and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1987.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:

- expressing concern that those named above (including a minor) and the 16 others were arrested between 1 and 3 September 1992, apparently for their links with a political party, and thus for exercising their right to freedom of association guaranteed by Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 13 (k) of Equatorial Guinea's new Constitution;
- expressing concern at reports that following their arrest they were subjected to torture and sustained injuries for which they have not received medical treatment, and that they are at risk of being subjected to further torture;
- urging that they be immediately allowed to receive visits from relatives and medical personnel;
- urging that if, as it appears, they are detained for their peaceful political activities, they be released immediately and unconditionally.

APPEALS TO

1. President

Su Excelencia

General de Brigada Teodoro Obiang Nguema

Presidente de la República

Gabinete del Presidente de la República

Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Presidente Obiang Nguema, Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

2. Minister of Justice and Religion

Su Excelencia

Mariano Nsué Nguema

Ministro de Justicia y Culto

Ministerio de Justicia y Culto

Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia Nsué Nguema, Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

3. Minister of Foreign Affairs

Su Excelencia

Benjamín Mba Ekua Mikó

Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores

Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores

Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores Mba Ekua, Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG

Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS 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 22 October 1992.