

26 September 2002

Further information on UA 194/02 (AFR 34/008/2002, 25 June 2002) and follow-ups (AFR 34/010/2002, 1 August 2002, and AFR 34/013/2002, 30 August 2002) - Fear for safety/Fear of torture or ill-treatment/Incommunicado detention/Health concern

LIBERIA Hassan Bility (m), journalist and human rights defender
Mohammad Kamara (m)
Ansumana Kamara (m)
Sheikh K.M. Sackor (m), human rights defender
Released: Moriah Sando Nyenetue (f)

Moriah Sando Nyenetue was released without charge in early September. She was not ill-treated in detention. Moriah Sando Nyenetue had been arrested on 20 August, when she travelled to the town of Klay, northwest of the capital Monrovia, in the hope of visiting Hassan Bility. She was detained solely because of her connection with Hassan Bility, by whom she has a child.

Amnesty International remains seriously concerned for the safety and well-being of Hassan Bility, journalist and editor of *The Analyst* newspaper, who has now been detained incommunicado for more than three months. While reports suggest that he has been moved between various places of detention, the authorities have consistently failed to make public where he is being held. There is equal concern for Sheikh K.M. Sackor, Executive Director of Humanist Watch, a human rights non-governmental organization, who was arrested on 25 July and whose whereabouts also remain undisclosed.

Writs of habeas corpus filed by lawyers on their behalf have been blatantly disregarded. In addition to fears that they will be tortured and ill-treated, Hassan Bility, who suffers from malaria, is still being denied access to medical care.

Mohammad Kamara and Ansumana Kamara, who were arrested together with Hassan Bility on 24 June, by two men in plain clothes believed to be members of the Criminal Investigation Division of the National Police, remain held at the National Security Agency (NSA). This is an official place of detention in Monrovia, where they have been able to receive visits from their families.

All four men have been accused of belonging to the armed opposition Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). None, however, has been charged with any offence and the continued detention of the four men without charge or trial violates both national and international fair trial guarantees.

All four are now to be tried under military jurisdiction. Although in the case of Sheikh K.M. Sackor the judge initially ruled that the case fell within civilian jurisdiction, he subsequently overturned this ruling, apparently as a result of undue influence by the government, and transferred it to military jurisdiction. Amnesty International is concerned that trials of civilians before military courts raises many issues about the chances of a fair trial.

On 14 September 2002 President Charles Taylor lifted the state of emergency which had been imposed in February 2002. The increased repression which followed the imposition of the state of emergency shows no sign of abating, however; perceived opponents of the government and human rights defenders remain under

constant threat of arrest and detention without charge or trial, torture and ill-treatment.

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

- welcoming the release of Moriah Sando Nyenetue but expressing concern that she was held without charge for some two weeks, solely because of her association with Hassan Bility;
- urging that the places of detention of Hassan Bility and Sheikh K.M. Sackor be immediately disclosed;
- urging that all detainees be protected from torture and ill-treatment and that they be allowed access to legal representation, relatives and adequate medical care, adding that Hassan Bility, in particular, is reported to be in need of urgent medical treatment;
- repeating concern about the prolonged detention without charge or trial of Hassan Bility, Mohammad Kamara, Ansumana Kamara and Sheikh K. M. Sackor;
- expressing serious concern that the initial ruling by the judge that the case of Sheikh K. M. Sackor fell under civilian jurisdiction was subsequently overturned and his case - as those of Hassan Bility, Mohammad Kamara and Ansumana Kamara - has been transferred to military jurisdiction, apparently as a result of political pressure;
- urging the authorities to immediately release Hassan Bility, Mohammad Kamara, Ansumana Kamara and Sheikh K. M. Sackor unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence before a civil court of law and tried fairly in accordance with international standards.

APPEALS TO:

(Please note that fax numbers may be difficult to obtain, but please keep trying)

President of the Republic of Liberia

His Excellency Mr Charles Taylor

Office of the President

Executive Mansion

PO Box 9001, Capitol Hill

Monrovia, Republic of Liberia

Fax: + 231 226 544 / 228 026 (if someone answers, ask for a fax tone)

Salutation: Dear President Taylor

Director of Police

Paul Mulbah

National Police Force

National Police Headquarters

Monrovia, Republic of Liberia

Fax: + 231 226 785

Salutation: Dear Mr Mulbah

Minister of Justice

Counsellor L. Koboi Johnson

Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice

Ashmun St, PO Box 9006

Monrovia, Republic of Liberia

Fax: + 231 227 872

Salutation: Dear Mr Johnson

COPIES TO:

EU Representative in Liberia

Ambassador Godfrey E. Rudd

Fax: + 231 226 274American Embassy in Liberia

Ambassador

John Blaney

111 United Nations Drive

Monrovia, Liberia

Fax: + 231 226 148/49

and to diplomatic representatives of Liberia accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 7 November 2002.