

4 November 2002

Further information on 322/02 (AFR 34/022/2002, 30 October 2002) - Fear of torture and ill-treatment/prisoners of conscience

LIBERIA Blamoh Sieh, human rights defender
Dempster Brown, lawyer, human rights defender
Aloysius Toe, human rights defender

Dempster Brown, Chairman of the Liberia Coalition of Human Rights Defenders, was released without charge on 30 October 2002. Blamoh Sieh, Coordinator of the National Human Rights Center, was released the following day, also without charge. Neither men were ill-treated while in detention.

The two men had both been arrested on 29 October in connection with activities by the Coalition to secure the release of two fellow human rights defenders; Hassan Bility and Sheikh K.M. Sackor. Also reported to have been arrested around the same time was Peter Nicholson, a research and security officer at the National Human Rights Center, who was held at Clara Town Police Station. He was released on 1 November.

On 4 November Aloysius Toe, Secretary General of the Coalition and a leading member of the National Human Rights Center, was charged with treason before a magistrate's court. He had gone into hiding following a raid by police on his home on 29 October and presented himself to the authorities for questioning on 4 November. The authorities had said that they were seeking him in connection with documents found at his home which, they allege, link him to the armed opposition Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). A ruling by a judge on whether to have a preliminary hearing of the case was adjourned until 6 November and Aloysius Toe was imprisoned at the Central Prison in Monrovia.

Amnesty International considers Aloysius Toe to be a prisoner of conscience and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

No further action is required by the network. Amnesty International is closely monitoring Aloysius Toe's case and is using other campaigning methods on his behalf. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.