

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 415/92 (AFR 36/46/92, 23 December 1992) - Fear of Torture/Legal concern

MALAWI:50 people arrested including Harry Chiume

Amnesty International can now confirm that all those arrested in a peaceful demonstration in Blantyre on 20 December 1992 protesting at the imprisonment of trade unionist Chakufwa Chihana, a prisoner of conscience (see Further information on UA 114/92, AFR 36/45/92, 14 December 1992), have been released. They were freed after about five days in police custody, which is longer than the normal period of 48 hours in custody after which criminal suspects should be charged or released. Over 130 were taken to court, charged with offences such as unlawful assembly and intent to cause a public disturbance, and then released on bail. They have been ordered to appear in court again on 1 February 1993, when their trials might begin. They were apparently not ill-treated while in police custody.

Those who were charged included Harry Chiume, a lawyer who represented Chakufwa Chihana at his trial and subsequent appeal, the judgment on which has not yet been given; Harry Chiume's wife; and another lawyer, Bezerege Mwafulirwa.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send airmail letters either in English or your own language:

- welcoming the release of all the demonstrators;
- expressing concern that many were charged with criminal offences simply for having peacefully exercised their basic rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the charges against them.

APPEALS TO:

1) H E The Life-President Ngwazi Dr
H. Kamuzu Banda
Office of the President and Cabinet
P/Bag 301
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Hon. J Z U Tembo
Minister of State in the Office of the
President
P/Bag 301
Lilongwe 3

Malawi

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr MacWilliam Lunguzi
Inspector-General of Police
P/Bag 305
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Salutation: Dear Sir

4) Mr F.L. Makuta
Minister of Justice
Office of the President
PO Box 301
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Salutation: Dear Sir

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COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

The Editor
The Weekly Post
Private Bag EF 352
Lusaka
Zambia
Alliance for Democracy (AFORD)
PO Box 50007
Lusaka
Zambia

The Editor
The Weekend Gazette
PO Box 66070
Harare
Zimbabwe

and to diplomatic representatives of Malawi accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 February 1992.