

UA 32/91

Torture/Prison Conditions/Legal Concern

29 January 1991

**MALI:** Achim Roger Almeida, student, Ecole nationale d'administration  
 Maïmouna Bâ (f), pupil, Ecole de la Poudrière, Bamako  
 Aliou Bâ, student, Ecole nationale d'administration  
 Seydou Camara, aged 20, electrician  
 Kassim Dembélé, student, Ecole nationale d'administration  
 Bernard Konaré, French teacher at Lycée Prosper Kamara, Bamako  
 Ahmed Sagaïdou Maïga, physics teacher at Centre national de recherches  
 scientifiques et techniques  
 Oumar Mariko, Secretary General of the Association des élèves et étudiants du  
 Mali, former prisoner of conscience  
 Abdoulaye Sogoba, student, Ecole nationale d'administration  
 Amadi Sylla, agricultural technician  
 Belco Tamboura, journalist with Aurore newspaper  
 Abdoulaye Traoré, student, Ecole nationale d'administration  
 + several hundred other men, women and children

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Children, some under 12 years of age, and other young people are reported to be among detainees who have been tortured or ill-treated by police in recent days in Mali. Many are said to have been severely beaten, others left outside for long periods in the full heat of the sun and denied water.

At least 240 - and possibly many more - people have been arrested since 18 January 1991 and detained incommunicado. They are being held, without charge or trial, following demonstrations and unrest in the capital, Bamako, between 18 and 22 January 1991. In one case, some 200 men, women and children are reported to be held in one large cell at the headquarters of the Groupement mobile de sécurité, Mobile Security Group, a special police unit, with no toilet or washing facilities and on a diet of bread and water. Others are held, also in harsh conditions, at the headquarters of the Brigade d'investigations judiciaires, the criminal investigation police, and at other police stations in and around Bamako.

Achim Roger Almeida, Aliou Bâ and Abdoulaye Sogoba, all students at the Ecole nationale d'administration, Civil Service College, were among over 20 people arrested on 18 January 1991 following a peaceful demonstration organized by the Comité national d'initiative démocratique (CNID), National Committee of Democratic Initiative. The security forces reportedly used batons and teargas against the marchers; among those injured was the President of the CNID, lawyer Mountaga Tall. Although 20 of the detainees were freed uncharged the next day, the three students are apparently still held. On 19 January members of the Alliance pour la démocratie malienne (ADEMA), Association for Democracy in Mali, were reportedly also beaten and assaulted by police as they met to cancel another demonstration. Police are reported to have broken the arm of Belco Tamboura, a journalist with the Aurore newspaper, who was arrested on 20 January after a CNID meeting in Faladié, near Bamako; he is believed to be detained at a hospital in Kati, also near Bamako. Amidou Diabaté, a judge and CNID Secretary-General, was detained on 23 January and held overnight for questioning about the organization's aims before being released without charge. Although rumoured to have been arrested on 18 January, Oumar Mariko, Secretary General of the Association des élèves et étudiants du Mali (AEEM), Association of Malian Pupils and Students, was not arrested until 28 January. The AEEM, founded in October 1990, is the first independent student organization since a government ban in 1980; Oumar Mariko, a former prisoner of conscience, was detained and convicted in 1986 in connection with attempts to re-establish an independent student body.

The other detainees named above are reported to have been arrested following demonstrations and unrest in Bamako on 21 and 22 January 1991 in which at least five people - including one child under the age of 18 - are said to have been killed by the security forces. On 21 January students marched in protest at the rumoured arrest of Oumar Mariko.

The marchers' ranks were swelled by young onlookers, and rioting ensued, with attacks on cars, government buildings and the homes of government officials. Although troops gained control of Bamako, the unrest spread in the next few days to other towns, including Bougouni, Ségou, Koulikoro, Kayes and Mopti. A further 50 people were reported to have been arrested in Bamako on 25 January following an attack on the house of the Director-General of Customs, Abraham Doua Sissoko, brother-in-law to President Moussa Traoré.

There have been several large and peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations in recent months. General Sékou Ly, noted for the severity with which he suppressed strikes by students and teachers in 1979 and 1980, was brought back to head the Interior Ministry on 8 January 1991. On 18 January he ordered the CNID, ADEMA and AEEM - all founded in October 1990 and in favour of multi-party democracy - to halt all political activity. On 25 January he reportedly denied that there had been hundreds of arrests and said that he knew of only two detentions following the unrest.

Under Malian law, the detainees should have been released if they were not brought before the judicial authorities and formally remanded in custody within 48 hours of arrest.

Wide powers of administrative detention, available to the security forces only in the administrative regions around Timbuktu and Gao, were apparently withdrawn last week when the state of emergency was lifted; it had been imposed in July 1990 to combat an uprising by members of the Tuareg ethnic group (see UA 335/90, AFR 37/03/90, 15 August 1990 and UA 354/90, AFR 37/04/90, 7 September 1990). In 1974 the Malian Government acceded to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights which outlaws torture, ill-treatment and arbitrary detention without charge or trial.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at reports that children and young people have been among detainees tortured or ill-treated and held in harsh conditions in police custody, that many have been severely beaten and others left outside for long periods in the full heat of the sun without water;
- expressing concern that men, women and children have been detained in the same cells without adequate food, water or sanitary facilities;
- calling for the Malian government to safeguard immediately all detainees from further torture or ill-treatment, and to ensure that they are held in accordance with international standards on conditions of imprisonment and given immediate access to their families and lawyers;
- expressing concern that at least 240 - and possibly many more - people are being detained illegally without charge or trial and without being referred to a judicial authority;
- appealing for the release of all prisoners of conscience - those held for the non-violent expression of their political views - and for the immediate release of any detainees who are not to be charged promptly with a recognizably criminal offence and formally remanded in custody;
- calling for an immediate and independent investigation into the killings by the security forces on 21 and 22 January 1991 and for publication of the inquiry's findings.

**APPEALS TO:**

S. E. Monsieur le Général Moussa Traoré  
Président de la République  
La Présidence  
B.P. 1463, Bamako, Mali

**Faxes: + 223 22 3980**

**Telexes: 2521 PREMALI MJ**

**Telegrams: President, Bamako, Mali**

Monsieur le Général Mamadou Coulibaly  
Ministre à la Défense nationale  
Ministère de la Défense nationale  
B.P. 215

Bamako, Mali

**Telegrams: Ministre Defense,  
Bamako, Mali**

Monsieur le Général Sékou Ly  
 Ministre de l'Intérieur  
 Ministère de l'Intérieur  
 Bamako, Mali

**Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Bamako, Mali**

Monsieur le Commandant Anatole Sangaré  
 Directeur à la Sécurité d'Etat  
 La Présidence  
 BP 1463, Bamako, Mali

**Telegrams: Directeur Securite, Bamako, Mali**  
**Telexes: 2487 SETAT MJ**

Monsieur le Lieutenant-Colonel Sambou Soumaré  
 Ministre de la Justice et Garde des Sceaux  
 Ministère de la Justice  
 B.P. 97, Bamako, Mali

**Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Bamako, Mali**

**COPIES TO:** - Monsieur le Docteur N'Golo Traoré, Ministre des Affaires étrangères,  
 Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Koulouba, Bamako, Mali

- Les Echos, BP 2043, Bamako, Mali                      - Aurore, BP 3150, Bamako, Mali  
 - L'Essor, BP 141, Bamako, Mali                         - Le Cafard Libéré, BP 7292, Dakar, Senegal  
 and to diplomatic representatives of Mali in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 March 1991.