

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal concern

9 July 1993

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| NIGERIA: Beko Ransome-Kuti, 52, doctor, Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy & President of the Committee for the Defence of Rights | Human |
| Femi Falana, lawyer, member of the Campaign for Democracy, of the National Association of Democratic (NADL) | President Lawyers |
| Chief Gani Fawehinmi, 55, human rights lawyer, member of the for Democracy | Campaign |

Amnesty International is concerned that prominent human rights activists in Nigeria are being repeatedly harassed and detained as protests mount against the government's failure to adhere to plans for a return to civilian rule at the end of August 1993. There are fears that arrests of those campaigning for democracy and human rights in Nigeria will continue and increase in the weeks to come.

Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy, an alliance of human rights groups which includes civil rights activists, lawyers, academics and students, and also President of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights, was arrested on the evening of 6 April at his home in Lagos. Tunji Thomas, an associate of Dr Ransome-Kuti, was arrested at the same time, but was later released. Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti's arrest on 6 July was the third in the space of a few days. He was arrested at his office in Lagos on 2 July, subsequently released but detained again the following morning for several hours. He had already been arrested and briefly held on several occasions since the beginning of 1993. He was also detained in 1992.

Femi Falana, a lawyer and a leading member of the Campaign for Democracy and President of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers (NADL), was arrested on 7 July. He too has been arrested on several occasions this year, as well as in previous years. On 9 March 1993 he was arrested and detained for questioning for several hours. He was arrested again on 16 April and held until the following day.

Chief Gani Fawehinmi, a prominent human rights lawyer, and also a member of the Campaign for Democracy, was arrested on 7 July. He had earlier been arrested on 3 July and detained until 5 July. He was also detained on several occasions in previous years.

No charges have been brought against Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana or Chief Gani Fawehinmi who are reported to be held separately in different police stations in Lagos. Amnesty International is calling for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience. It is also urging that the constant harassment and detention of those campaigning peacefully for democracy and human rights in Nigeria cease.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The latest arrests of Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana and Chief Gani Fawehinmi came after the Campaign for Democracy called for a week of protest against the government's decision on 23 June 1993 not to announce the results of the presidential election which took place

on 12 June 1993, claiming that there had been malpractices during the election. International observers, however, judged that the election had largely been fair. Two candidates, representing parties established by the military government of President Ibrahim Babangida, contested the election. Although the results were not officially announced, it was clear that Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) had been successful. In addition to cancelling the results of the presidential election, the government repealed legislation allowing for the transition to civilian rule. President Babangida maintained, however, that he would still hand over power to a civilian government on 27 August 1993.

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Work stoppages and peaceful demonstrations called by the Campaign for Democracy in protest against the government's refusal to recognise the result of the presidential election began on 5 July. However, in Lagos rioting and looting broke out and the security forces reacted with force. The independent Nigerian press has put the number of those killed at as many as 75.

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

- expressing concern about the recent arrests and detention without charge of Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana and Chief Gani Fawehinmi;
- also expressing concern that they have been repeatedly targeted for harassment and arrest because of their peaceful activities to promote democracy and human rights;
- urging the immediate and unconditional release of Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana and Chief Gani Fawehinmi as prisoners of conscience;
- calling for an end to the arrest and detention of people for their political views and activities where they have not used or advocated violence.

APPEALS TO

1) General Ibrahim Babangida
President and Chairman of the National
Defence and Security Council
State House
Abuja
Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

Telegrams: President Babangida, Abuja, Nigeria

Telexes: [0905] 91529 or 91530 EXTNAL NG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear President

2) Mr Clement Akpamgbo
Attorney General of the Federation,
Minister of Justice and member of the
National Defence and Security Council
Ministry of Justice
Abuja
Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

Telegrams: Attorney General Akpamgbo, Abuja, Nigeria

Telexes: [0905] 91529 or 91530 EXTNAL NG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Chief Matthew Mbu
Minister of Foreign Affairs and member of
the National Defence and Security Council
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Maputo Street
Abuja
Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

Daily Times, PMB 21340, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
National Concord, POB 4483, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
The Guardian, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria
Newswatch, PMB 21499, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria

and to diplomatic representatives of Nigeria accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 20 August 1993.