

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PRESS RELEASE

AI Index: AFR 44/013/2003 (Public)  
News Service No: 112  
6 May 2003

## **Nigeria: False information about Amnesty International's campaign on Amina Lawal**

Amnesty International today moved to correct misleading information falsely attributed to one of the web pages of the Spanish section of Amnesty International. Information has been widely distributed by email falsely claiming that Amina Lawal's execution had been set for 3 June 2003 and referring to Amnesty International as a source.

Contrary to this information widely circulated on internet, Amnesty International has consistently published accurate information about the case on all its official web pages.

Amnesty International regards Amina Lawal's case as of the highest priority and appreciates the support that members of the public have given the campaign. However, circulating emails with inaccurate information causes many problems for all the groups working hard to defend Amina Lawal and women's human rights in Nigeria.

"All our web pages contain up-to-date information on Amina Lawal's case. Our public material mentions 3 June 2003 not as the date for carrying out a sentence of death, but as the new date set by the *Sharia* Court of Appeal of Katsina State for the hearing against her sentence," Amnesty International said. An Amnesty International delegation was present in Court in Katsina state on 25 March 2003, when the new date was fixed.

Amnesty International understands that Amina Lawal's right to legal representation, fair trial and right to appeal are guaranteed at present. Amina Lawal is not in detention and has excellent legal representation, including prominent women lawyers and senior Nigerian advocates. She is being supported by a coalition of Nigerian women's groups and human rights groups. Amnesty International is in close touch with these organizations and is careful to include only the most accurate information on its websites.

According to the Nigerian Constitution, at the end of all judicial processes involving the death penalty, the President of the Republic could exercise his prerogative of mercy, a political, and not a judicial, decision.

"We will not hesitate to campaign for such a prerogative to be exerted by the President in due time, as we would for any case attracting the death penalty under any penal code, including *Sharia* Penal Legislation," the organization stressed.

Amnesty International will continue to publicly call on the Federal Government to abolish the death penalty and amend all legislation introducing cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments at all levels of the Nigerian legislation, including the *Sharia* Penal Legislation. However, the organization does not wish to interfere in the judicial process in the case of Amina Lawal and does not recommend carrying out any international campaign specifically on her case at this point in time.

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