

UA 217/95

Execution / Fear of further executions13 September 1995**NIGERIA32 prisoners convicted of armed robbery**

---

Eighteen prisoners convicted of armed robbery offences were executed in public by firing squad on or around 8 September 1995. The executions took place in a sports stadium in Warri, Delta State, southern Nigeria. The executions are reported to have been carried out as part of a crackdown on crime in the region.

Amnesty International fears that more executions may be carried out in the near future.

Doctors are reported to have been present at the execution of the prisoners who were aged between 18 and 30. Details of their convictions are not known; it appears some may have been sentenced up to 10 years ago. An official present at the execution, apparently a prison driver, was reportedly killed by a stray bullet from the firing squad.

It is feared that another 14 prisoners were executed in public in Akwa Ibom State earlier in the month, after their executions were approved by the State Military Administrator. Three executions were due to take place on 2 September and a further 11 on 5 September.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty without reservation. It considers the death penalty to be incompatible with the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Nowhere has it been shown that the death penalty has any special power to reduce crime or political violence. Moreover it believes that public executions are not only a further degradation of the prisoner but that they can brutalize those that watch and may perpetrate the dangerous idea that violent retribution is the best way to prevent wrong-doing.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

To date at least 86 people are known to have been executed in public this year in Nigeria, all of whom were convicted by Robbery and Firearms Tribunals, which are special courts outside the normal judicial system. These courts cannot guarantee fair trials and allow no right of appeal to a higher, independent jurisdiction, in contravention of human rights standards to which Nigeria is committed.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:**

To the State Military Administrator, Delta State:

- expressing concern at the public execution of 18 prisoners in Delta State on or around 8 September 1995;

To the State Military Administrator, Akwa Ibom State:

- expressing regret that a further 14 prisoners convicted of armed robbery are believed to have been executed in Akwa Ibom State;

To both State Military Administrators:

- calling on the military government to stop all executions and to commute all death sentences;
- expressing particular concern at the practice of public executions which brutalizes in the most immediate way those who watch;
- stating that Amnesty International, while not condoning the crimes for which the prisoners were convicted, is unconditionally opposed to the death penalty in all cases on the grounds that it is a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment and which is shown to have no special deterrent effect.

**APPEALS TO:**

Group Captain Ibrahim Kefas  
State Military Administrator  
Government House, Asaba  
Delta State, Nigeria

**Telegrams : Administrator Kefas, Delta State, Nigeria**

**Salutation : Dear Administrator**

Lieutenant Colonel Yakubo Bako  
State Military Administrator  
Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

**Telegrams : Administrator Bako, Akwa Iboma State, Nigeria**

**Salutation : Dear Administrator**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr Michael Agbamuche  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Ministry of Justice  
PMB 130, Abuja  
Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

Chief Tom Ikimi  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
Maputo Street  
PMB 130, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

The Editor, *Daily Times*, PMB 21340, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Abuja Times*, Daily Times Publications, Abuja Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Vanguard*, PMB 1007, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Nigerian Tide*, PMB 5072, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Point*, 222 Aba Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Mid-West This Week*, Arin Associates, 50B New Lagos Road, Benin City, Edo State, 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 25 October 1995.