

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 44/19/96

2 August 1996

Further information on UA 138/96 (AFR 44/09/96, 7 June 1996) - Fear of extrajudicial executions / Prisoner of conscience and new concerns: Prisoners of conscience / Health concern / Legal concern

NIGERIA Alhaja Kudirat Abiola (f), aged 44, businesswoman
 Moshood Abiola, aged 58, winner of 1993 presidential elections

and new names: Alhaji Ganiyu Dawodu, aged 63
Chief Ayo Adebajo, aged 69
Former Senator Abraham Adesanya, aged 74

Amnesty International believes that three senior members of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), arrested in connection with the murder on 4 June 1996 of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, are prisoners of conscience detained on account of their non-violent political views. The three remain in detention, uncharged and in conditions seriously prejudicial to their health, despite a court ruling ordering their release.

Alhaji Ganiyu Dawodu, Chief Ayo Adebajo and former Senator Abraham Adesanya were arrested on 17 June. Although they have not been charged, the police have indicated that they have been detained in connection with the killing of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, senior wife of prisoner of conscience Chief Moshood Abiola, winner of the 1993 presidential elections.

Promptly after the arrests, lawyers for the three detainees launched a legal challenge before the Federal High Court, Lagos, asking the court to compel the authorities to give reasons for their detention and to issue an order that the detainees should be produced in court. On 16 July, the court declared that their detention was unlawful and ordered their immediate release. It also ordered that Naira 500,000 be paid to each of the detainees by the authorities as compensation. An appeal by the authorities against the release order was rejected on 23 July. Despite this, the three remain in detention without charge.

Amnesty International has received reports that the health of the three men is being seriously threatened by the harsh prison conditions in which they are being held. Former Senator Adesanya is currently in the Police Hospital, Obalende, Lagos, for treatment. The other two are being held in Ikoyi Police Station, Lagos. The three are reported to have been held in crowded cells without adequate ventilation and forced to sleep on bare floors.

The Nigerian government has failed to initiate a thorough and impartial investigation into the assassination of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola, which Amnesty International believes may have been carried out by government agents acting with or without the knowledge of the central authorities. The police inquiry which has been set up does not meet international standards for the investigation of possible extrajudicial executions. Opposition leaders have accused the government of seeking to implicate the three senior NADECO figures in the murder as part of efforts on its part to divide and destroy the pro-democracy movement in Nigeria.

A fourth senior member of NADECO, Chief Solanke Onasanya, aged 80, was also arrested and detained on 17 June. Frail of health and with poor eyesight, he was released without charge on 1 July.

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

- expressing concern at the continued detention of senior NADECO figures Alhaji Ganiyu Dawodu, Chief Ayo Adebajo and former Senator Abraham Adesanya, despite the court ruling ordering their release and the payment of compensation;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of their political views;
- expressing concern at reports that these men, all over 60 years old, are being held in harsh conditions which are seriously affecting their health;
- urging that, while in custody, the three be allowed full and immediate access to their lawyers and families, and to appropriate medical care;

if possible also:

- expressing concern that the police inquiry into the killing of Alhaja Kudirat Abiola does not meet international standards for the investigation of possible extrajudicial executions and reiterating calls for such an inquiry to satisfy the 1989 UN Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions;
- repeating calls for the immediate and unconditional release of Moshood Abiola.

APPEALS TO:

General Sani Abacha
Chairman, Provisional Ruling Council
State House, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Telegrams: General Abacha, Abuja, Nigeria
Faxes: + 234 9 523 2138
Telexes: (0905) 91529 or 91530 EXTNAL NG
Salutation: Dear General

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

Alhaji Ibrahim Coomasie
Inspector General of Police
Nigeria Police Force Headquarters
Garki, Abuja, Nigeria
Telegrams: Police Inspector General, Police HQ, Garki, Abuja, Nigeria
Salutation: Dear Inspector General

COPIES TO:

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

The Editor, *The News*, PMB 21531, Ijeka, Lagos, Nigeria
The Editor, *Tell*, PMB 21749, Ijeka, Lagos, Nigeria
The Editor, *Vanguard*, PMB 1007, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria
The Editor, *The Guardian*, PMB 1217, Oshodi, 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 September 1996.