

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Amnesty International
International Secretariat
1 Easton Street
London WC1X 8DJ

United Kingdom

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ESENEGAL: @SUMMARY OF AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONCERNS SINCE JANUARY 1991

On 28 May 1991 the government of Senegal announced the release of all prisoners held in connection with the Casamance separatist movement and the cancellation of any legal proceedings against them. Some 346 prisoners were reportedly released, including well-known figures such as Abbé Diamacoune Senghor and Ankiling Diabone. On 31 May 1991 a ceasefire agreement was signed in Bissau, the capital of neighbouring Guinea-Bissau, between the government and the armed opposition *Mouvement des forces démocratiques de Casamance* (MFDC), Democratic Forces of Casamance Movement. Amnesty International welcomed the release of political prisoners, many of whom had been held for long periods without trial and subjected to torture. The organization remains concerned that the amnesty announced in May 1991 appears to have been interpreted by the Senegalese authorities to grant immunity from prosecution to those responsible for human rights violations, such as the ill-treatment or torture of Casamance prisoners or extrajudicial executions. In 1989 government officials told Amnesty International representatives that a similar amnesty declared in June 1988 prevented further investigations into reports of torture before that date. Amnesty International has repeatedly urged the Senegalese government to organise an independent and impartial investigation into all allegations of torture so that a framework can be established to ensure that torture does not take place.

Despite the cease-fire, there has been further unrest in Casamance but the MFDC has denied responsibility for the attacks. Amnesty International is currently investigating the circumstances in which more than 50 people, including two soldiers, were killed in early September 1992 following clashes near Kaguit between the security forces and MFDC separatists.

Following the overthrow of President Hisssein Habré of Chad in December 1990, he was allowed to take up residence in Senegal. Gross and persistent abuses of human rights had taken place in Chad under President Habré's eight-year rule and evidence emerged publicly in Chad since December 1990 that President Habré was involved personally in ordering the use of torture and extrajudicial executions. Amnesty International is concerned that Senegalese authorities have made no moves to ensure that former President Habré is brought to justice. Senegal's apparently failure is a violation of its obligations under the United Nations' Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Senegal in 1986.