

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 277/92 Fear of torture

4 September 1992

TOGO: Captain Esso Charles Pello, aged 40, secretary of the Togolese Armed Forces and former head of the Intelligence Services

Captain Esso Charles Pello was arrested at a former colleague's house in the capital, Lomé, on 28 July 1992. He was then transferred to the Brigade de Gendarmerie (local headquarters of a para-military police force) in Kara, the home region of Togo's head of state in the north of the country. Amnesty International has received reports that he has been subjected to electric shocks, beatings and deprived of food. As a result of torture, he has had to be taken to hospital, apparently in a coma, where he received medical treatment. He is currently held at the military camp in Kara, and has not been charged or tried. His family has not been allowed to visit him.

Since political reforms began last year in Togo, Captain Pello has apparently been suspected by the Presidency and members of the armed forces of having close links with the President's political opponents. Before his arrest he had reportedly been threatened with death several times. He was moved to less significant posts within the Togolese Armed Forces, and in May 1992 he refused a posting to Kara, apparently for fear that he would be subjected to harassment for his criticism of past army activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Togo is going through a turbulent transitional period towards a multi-party democracy. After months of violent confrontations in early 1991 between the security forces and opponents of the one-party system, President Gnassingbé Eyadéma and his government agreed to make reforms towards a multi-party political system and held a national conference which ran from July to August 1991. It examined human rights violations since President Eyadéma came to power in 1967 and elected Joseph Kokou Koffigoh as Prime Minister, who nominated a transitional government to run the country until general elections are held. However, the army has tried several times to halt the process of reform. Furthermore, although the National Conference provided for power to be in the hands of the government rather than the President, in practice there is rivalry between the two, with the President retaining control over the armed forces.

As a result of this increased instability, leading opposition figures have been the target of assassination attempts, apparently by members of the army (see UA 247/92, AFR 57/06/92, 30 July 1992). In May 1992, Gilchrist Olympio, President of the Union des Forces de Changement (UFC), a coalition of 10 political parties, was seriously injured in northern Togo where he was attending a political rally. In July 1992, Tavio Amarin, a leading member of a coalition of political parties, was seriously wounded in an attack and later died in Paris where he was receiving medical treatment.

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

- expressing concern at reports that Captain Esso Charles Pollo has been detained

incommunicado and without charge since 28 July 1992;

- enquiring about the legal basis for the detention of Captain Pello and any charges against him;
- expressing concern at reports that he has been subjected to torture and requesting assurances that he is not submitted to any further cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- urging the authorities to allow him immediate access to representatives of the Procuracy, legal counsel, and to relatives, and also urging that he receives adequate medical treatment without any delay;

page 2 of UA 277/92 ...

- appealing for his immediate and unconditional release if, it appears, he is held purely on account of his suspected links with political opponents of President Eyadéma.

In addition to the above, please include the following in your appeals to the Minister of Justice and to the Prime Minister:

- appealing for an immediate and impartial investigation of the circumstances in which Captain Esso Charles Pello has been detained and reportedly subjected to torture.

APPEALS TO:

1. President

Son Excellence Monsieur le Général
Gnassingbé Eyadéma
Président de la République
Palais présidentiel
Avenue de la Marina
Lomé, Togo

**Telegrams: Président de la
République, Lomé, Togo**

Telexes: 5319; 5419; 5201 TMS THG

**Salutation: Monsieur le président/ Dear
President**

2. Chief of Army Staff

Chef d'Etat-major général
Camp militaire Tokoin
Boulevard des Armées
Lomé, Togo

**Telegrams: Chef d'Etat-major, Lomé,
Togo**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Chef
d'Etat-major / Dear Chief of Army Staff**

3. Minister of Justice

Monsieur Alfred Koami Kouma Tordjo
Ministre de la Justice et Garde des
Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
Angle Avenue de la Marina
Rue Colonel de Roux
Lomé, Togo

**Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice,
Lome, Togo**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear
Minister**

4. Prime Minister and Minister of
Defence

Monsieur Joseph Kokou Koffigoh
Premier Ministre, Ministre de la Défense
La Primature
Lome, Togo

**Telegrams: Premier Ministre Joseph
Koffigoh, Lomé, Togo**

**Salutation: Monsieur le Premier
Ministre / Dear Prime Minister**

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Minister for Human Rights

Monsieur Djovi Gally
Ministre des droits de l'homme
Ministère des droits de l'homme
Lomé, Togo

BP 3681

Lomé, Togo

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Koffi Kpé Homawo

BP 660

Lomé, Togo

and to diplomatic representatives of Togo accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 16 October 1992.