

EXTERNAL

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Fear for Safety

19 April 1996

**CONGO Emmanuel Cole, Liberian refugee, aged 33,
and other refugees living in Congo**

Emmanuel Cole, President of the *Association des Réfugiés du Congo*, Association of Refugees in Congo, received death threats from a member of the *Direction pour la Surveillance du Territoire* (DST), Department for the Surveillance of the Territory, on 30 March 1996. Emmanuel Cole had already been arrested on 9 November 1995 and detained by the DST allegedly for having criticized Congolese authorities and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in their handling of refugee protection in Congo. During his detention he was reportedly tortured and ill-treated. He was eventually released on 4 December 1995 after he had promised to become an informer for the DST. It is believed that it is because of his failure to keep this promise that Emmanuel Cole is presently the victim of threats and harassments. On 1 April, he escaped injury when shots were fired at him from a passing car, as he was walking with another refugee.

Amnesty International is extremely concerned for Emmanuel Cole's safety and is urgently calling on Congo's authorities to ensure that his safety is guaranteed and protected according to Congolese laws and the United Nations Convention on the Status of Refugees (1951) and its Protocol (1967).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Congo has faced a situation of anarchy after political parties refused to accept the results of the 1992 and 1993 elections. This culminated in the creation of paramilitary militia and the politicization of all institutions in the country. Although Congo has recovered some political stability, cases of arbitrary killings are still reported. On 8 December 1995, a soldier attacked a woman's house and seriously injured her two children. At the end of December 1995, a 29-year-old woman was killed by a soldier in the Cuvette area and, on 9 April 1996, a Nigerian citizen was killed by unknown persons. Refugees and human rights organizations in Congo have often complained about the slowness in the handling of refugee files and the fact that the DST has too much power in the granting of refugee status. This sometimes leads to conflicts of competence between governmental departments dealing with refugees. Demba Bassirou, a Mauritanian citizen, who was first granted refugee status by the *Comité National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés* and then had his case rejected by the DST, was forced to return to Mauritania. A Zairean refugee was arrested in 1993 and has not been seen since.

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

- expressing concern that Emmanuel Cole, President of the *Association des Réfugiés au Congo* had been threatened with death, allegedly by security police (DST);
- urging investigations into the threats and calling for those responsible to be brought promptly to justice;
- calling on the authorities to guarantee Emmanuel Cole's safety;
- asking for the protection of all refugees against human rights violations, including arbitrary and unlawful arrest, torture and *refoulement*, in accordance with the International Convention relating to Refugees.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Joseph OUABARI
Ministère de la Justice
BP , Brazzaville, Congo

Telegrams: Ministre de la Justice, Brazzaville, Congo
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Philippe BIKINKITA

Ministre de l'Intérieur, chargé de la sécurité et
du développement urbain
Ministère de l'Intérieur
BP 1219, Brazzaville, Congo

Faxes: +242 835121
Telegrams: Ministre de l'Intérieur, Brazzaville, Congo
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/ Dear Minister

Haut Commissaire à la Culture Démocratique et aux Droits de l'Homme

Monsieur Jean-Blaise KOLOLO
Haut Commissariat aux Droits de l'Homme
BP 114, Brazzaville, Congo

Telegrams: Haut Commissaire aux Droits de l'Homme, Brazzaville, Congo
Salutation: Monsieur le Haut Commissaire / Dear High Commissioner

COPIES TO:

Head of State

Son Excellence Monsieur Pascal Lissouba
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Brazzaville, Congo

Faxes: +242 835067

Prime Minister

Monsieur Jacques-Joachim YHOMBI-OPANGO
Premier Ministre
Bureau du Premier Ministre
BP 2096, Brazzaville, Congo

Faxes: +242 831034

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Monsieur Arsène TSATY-BOUNGOU
Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération
Ministère des Affaires Etrangères et de la Coopération
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Brazzaville, Congo

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and to diplomatic representatives of Congo accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 May 1996.