

EXTERNAL

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Fear of torture / Health concern /
Prisoners of conscience

19 September 1997

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

Sinecio Ngua Esono

Francisco Abeso Mba

Two prisoners of conscience are at risk of torture in incommunicado detention in Bata, the capital of Equatorial Guinea's mainland region of Río Muni.

Sinecio Ngua Esono and Francisco Abeso Mba have been detained since 26 August 1997. Amnesty International has received reports that for the first three weeks they were held in a container in Bata harbour where they were severely beaten and tortured. On 15 September they were transferred to Bata prison where they are being held incommunicado and without any medical care.

Sinecio Ngua Esono was arrested in his hometown, Mongomo, soon after his return to Río Muni from Malabo, Equatorial Guinea's capital on Bioko island, where he had attended a seminar on the independent press. Francisco Abeso Mba had come to welcome Sinecio Ngua Esono at Bata airport. The police went to Francisco Abeso Mba's home to arrest him, and when they could not find him they took his wife hostage. They only released her when they were able to arrest Francisco Abeso Mba.

Amnesty International believes that these two members of the not yet legalized opposition party *Fuerza Demócrata Republicana* (FDR), Republican Democratic Force, have been detained solely on account of their non-violent political activity.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Despite the fact that in February 1997 President Obiang Nguema publicly ordered the security forces not to obstruct peaceful political activities, arrests of political activists continued and increased soon after the signing of a new National Pact between the government and most opposition parties in late April. Three opposition parties have been particularly targeted: the *Convergencia para la Democracia Social* (CDPS), Convergence for Social democracy and the FDR - two parties which had been excluded from the discussion leading to the signing of the National Pact in April 1997 - and thirdly, the *Partido del Progreso* (PP), Progress Party, whose members have been targeted for some weeks following the government claim that the party's leader, Severo Moto, had organized a plot to overthrow the government.

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

- urging that Sinecio Ngua Esono and Francisco Abeso Mba be immediately and unconditionally released as prisoners of conscience detained for their non-violent political activities;
- expressing deep concern that they were held in a container in Bata harbour and at reports that they were tortured;
- urging that their safety be guaranteed, and calling for them to have immediate access to their families, lawyers and medical care;
- calling for those responsible for any torture to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO

1. President

Teodoro Obiang Nguema
Presidente de la República
Gabinete del Presidente de la República
Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial
Faxes: + 240 9 33 13
Teleles: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG
Telegrams: Presidente Nguema, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial
Salutation: Su Excelencia / Your Excellency

2. Minister of Justice

Sr Ignacio Milan Tang
Ministro de Justicia y Culto
Ministerio de Justicia y Culto
Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial
Telegrams : Ministro de Justicia, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial
Telexes : 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG
Salutacion : Excelentísimo Señor / Dear Minister

3. Minister of Interior

Julio Ndong Ela Mangué
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial
Telegrams : Ministro de Interior, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial
Telexes : 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG
Salutación : Excelentísimo Señor / Dear Minister

COPIES TO :

Foreign Minister

Miguel Oyono Ndong Mifumu
Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación
Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial
Faxes: + 240 9 2320

and to diplomatic representatives of Equatorial Guinea accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 November 1997.