

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 77/92 (AFR 31/02/92, 5 March 1992) - and follow-up(s):
AFR 31/05/92, 24 April 1992 and AFR 31/06/92, 11 May 1992 - Legal Concern

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Michel Gbagbo, son of Laurent Gbagbo, FPI leader

At least 77 prisoners of conscience, including all those listed above, were released on 31 July, two days after an amnesty law was unanimously passed by the National Assembly. They had been serving sentences ranging from one to three years.

They had been convicted between February and April 1992 of "sharing responsibility" for criminal damage caused during demonstrations in February in the capital, Abidjan. The demonstrators were protesting against the government's refusal to act upon the findings of a Commission of Inquiry into human rights violations committed during an army raid on Yopougon University campus in May 1991. Although the demonstrations began peacefully, they later resulted in violence, which some observers claim was provoked by government agents.

The amnesty law pardons all past offences in connection with the restoration of multi-party democracy, including attending banned meetings and marches or writing anti-government articles, as well as violence during demonstrations or by the security forces.

Please send no further appeals. Thank you to all those who sent appeals on their behalf.