

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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This is a limited action, please organize up to ten appeals per section.

EXTRA 64/92

Medical Concern

9 July 1992

KENYA:

Rumba Kinuthia, lawyer

Rumba Kinuthia, 35, a lawyer and pro-democracy activist awaiting trial on treason charges and currently in custody at Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi, is suffering from dangerously high blood pressure and his doctor and family are being denied access to him.

In the last week and a half the conditions under which Rumba Kinuthia is held have deteriorated and he is now chained to his bed 23 hours a day, with breaks of 30 minutes only in the morning and evening. His doctor was reportedly denied access to him on 8 July 1992 in contravention of a court order of 15 April 1992 allowing the doctor access. Hospital staff attending him are said to have been harassed by the armed prison warders guarding him.

Amnesty International is concerned that Rumba Kinuthia's blood pressure has been seriously aggravated by the conditions under which he is currently being held. He is now being given intravenous hydrallazine in an attempt to control his blood pressure and prevent a stroke. He is also suffering persistent headaches, loss of sleep and depression. He has considerable pain in his right arm and shoulder, which was dislocated when he was beaten by a prison warder while trying to stop another guard beating his mother, for a minor infringement of visiting rules. He is currently awaiting a tonsillectomy, but this can not be performed until his blood pressure is under control.

Rumba Kinuthia has been in custody at Kenyatta National Hospital since March 1992, when he was admitted suffering high blood pressure, severe headaches, coughing blood, nose bleeds and depression originating from torture shortly after his arrest in 1990. He was transferred back to Kamiti Maximum Security prison in April 1992, despite being still seriously ill with high blood pressure, vomiting and more bleeding, but he was returned to hospital some days later following national and international appeals over his state of health.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rumba Kinuthia, was arrested on 8 October 1990 and charged with treason on 19 October 1990 with three others, including Koigi wa Wamwere who is the main defendant and a former member of parliament and leader-in-exile in Norway of the opposition Kenya Patriotic Front. If convicted they face the death penalty. Four others, including Rumba Kinuthia's brother, who were also charged with the same offence, were released on 24 June 1992 when President Daniel arap

Moi instructed that the charges against them be dropped. Amnesty International is investigating the case of Rumba Kinuthia and is concerned that he may have been arrested for his non-violent opposition to the government and his association with and previous legal representation of Koigi wa Wamwere, rather than because of any clear evidence of his use or advocacy of violence.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the deterioration of the treatment of Rumba Kinuthia in custody in hospital;
- explaining that chaining a sick prisoner for 23 hours a day appears to be cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and calling for this to be ended immediately;
- appealing for him to be allowed all necessary medical treatment without delay or restriction, and regular private visits from his doctor and family.

APPEALS TO:

President Daniel arap Moi
President of the Republic of Kenya,
Office of the President
PO Box 30510
Nairobi, Kenya

Telegrams: President Moi, Nairobi, Kenya
Telexes: 22003 FOREIGNRB or 22696 FOREIGNRB
(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 254 2 33 7340 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Your Excellency

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

1) Mr Amos Wako
Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
PO Box 40112
Nairobi
Kenya

2) Mr Jeremiah Nyagah
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
PO Box 30016
Nairobi
Kenya

3) Mr James Mareka
Commissioner of Prisons
Kenya Prisons Service Headquarters
PO Box 30175
Nairobi
Kenya

4) Mr Charles Gituma
Assistant Senior Commissioner
Kenya Prisons Service Headquarters
PO Box 30175
Nairobi
Kenya

and to diplomatic representatives of Kenya in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 31 July 1992.