

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 32/07/97

Please limit appeals to 10 per section.

UA 31/97

Harassment / Fear for safety

28 January 1997

KENYA Wafule Buke, Thiong'o Kagicha and other members of the Kenya Human Rights Commission

Amnesty International is concerned about the harassment of members of the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), a local human rights non-governmental organization, for carrying out their legitimate activities.

On Saturday 25 January 1997 the KHRC were hindered in their attempts to hold a meeting to launch their *Campaign against Police Killings*. They are protesting the excessive use of force by the Kenyan police which they believe has resulted in an increase in killings of alleged criminals. Earlier that day Wafule Buke, a KHRC staff member, was arrested while distributing leaflets advertising the launch in Nairobi. He was held for six hours at Kabete police station, Nairobi before being released without charge. A second member of the KHRC, Thiong'o Kagicha, was beaten by a senior police officer whilst protesting against the arrest of Wafule Buke. He was wounded in the leg.

The proposed venue for the launch meeting near Nairobi was cordoned off by 50 riot police thereby preventing the meeting from going ahead at that location.

The meeting location changed to Langata Cemetery, Nairobi at the grave of a man killed by suspected members of the KANU Youth Wing, an arm of the ruling Kenyan African National Unity Party. The meeting then went ahead without police interference.

The KHRC campaign is to continue for the next six months. Amnesty International is concerned that during this period members of the KHRC staff will be targeted for further harassment because of their campaigning activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The KHRC is the most prominent human rights NGO (non-governmental organization) in Kenya and its staff have been attacked previously for carrying out their work. In March 1995 their offices, which they shared with a legal aid organization, were firebombed (see UA 69/95, AFR 32/04/95). The KHRC has documented the excessive use of force by police, which they conclude has led to an increase in killings of suspects by police under suspicious circumstances, as well as alleged killings by KANU Youthwingers, who have been accused of human rights violations on a number of occasions.

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

- expressing concern about the arrest of Wafule Buke and the beating sustained by Thiong'o Kagicha;
- seeking assurances that members of the KHRC staff will not be subjected to arrests, brutality, threats or harassment by the Kenyan police;
- protesting against the police presence that prevented the meeting from going ahead at the original location;
- urging that local NGOs be allowed to carry out their legitimate work without fear of harassment and intimidation.

APPEALS TO:

2

Commissioner Duncan Kabethi Wachira
Commissioner of Police
PO Box 30083, Nairobi, Kenya

Telegrams: Police Commissioner Wachira, Nairobi, Kenya

Faxes: +254 2 240955 or 330495 (if no tone please try later)

Salutation: Dear Commissioner

Mr Amos Wako
Attorney General
PO Box 40112
Nairobi, Kenya

Telegrams: Attorney General Wako, Sheria, Kenya

Faxes: +254 2 211082

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

COPIES TO:

Professor O Mutungi
Chairman
Standing Committee on Human Rights
PO Box 74359
Nairobi

Kenyan Human Rights Commission (KHRC)
PO Box 55235
Nairobi

and to diplomatic representatives of Kenya accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 11 March 1997.