

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 192/91 Medical concern/Prisoner of Conscience

7 June 1991

**KENYA: Kenneth Matiba, former government minister**

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Kenneth Matiba, aged 58, a prisoner of conscience detained without trial since 4 July 1990, has recently suffered a stroke in prison, according to his family. He has been admitted to Nairobi hospital - still in security custody. His family and doctor have been denied both access to him and any information about him.

Kenneth Matiba has been held in permanent solitary confinement in Kamiti maximum security prison near Nairobi. He has suffered constantly from hypertension and high blood pressure as a result of being held in a cell block next to prisoners suffering from mental illness who *"shout obscenities, and sing and cry at the top of their voices"* all day and night long. In January 1991, according to his lawyer, he looked *"haggard and patently under great stress, his hair was turning brown and thinning"*, and his blood pressure reading was *"unacceptable"*, according to a medical doctor who examined him. He told his lawyer at the time that *"the government might well be desiring him to die or suffer a stroke through 'natural causes'"*.

The security authorities have persistently refused regular access to and treatment by his own doctor, who criticised his treatment by the prison medical services as inadequate. He has not been allowed a bed, but has had to sleep on the concrete cell floor with blankets. His diet has been constantly very poor and he is not allowed to receive supplementary food from his family. Family visits have been rare and short, and always under supervision. He is allowed very little reading material. Amnesty International's medical groups have made repeated appeals for him to receive proper medical treatment but have received no response from the Kenyan government.

Kenneth Matiba (who was Amnesty International's Prisoner of the Month in April 1991), a prominent businessman and former member of parliament and government minister, is held under an administrative detention order which permits detention without charge or trial for an indefinite period. He was arrested in Nairobi in July 1990 on account of his calls for the introduction of a multi-party system in Kenya. Another person detained at the same time, Charles Rubia, also a former government minister, was released on 12 April 1991 on medical grounds (suspected cancer), but a third, Raila Odinga, is still detained. Both Kenneth Matiba and Raila Odinga began legal proceedings against the government this week, alleging that their continued detention is inhuman and unlawful.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:**

- expressing concern at the medical condition of Kenneth Matiba, probably brought about by the harsh conditions in which he has been held and by denial of adequate medical treatment;
- urging that, while still in custody, he is given all necessary medical treatment in proper conditions and in consultation with his own doctor, and that he is allowed regular access to his family;
- urging his immediate and unconditional release as a prisoner of conscience

imprisoned for his non-violent opinions.

**APPEALS TO:**

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

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

**COPIES TO:**

Mr James Mareka  
Commissioner of Prisons  
Kenya Prison Service HQ  
PO Box 30175  
Nairobi, Kenya

Assitant Commissioner Geoffrey Kinoti  
Kenya Police HQ  
PO Box 30083  
Nairobi, Kenya

Mr Amos Wako  
Attorney General  
Office of the Attorney General  
PO Box 40112  
Nairobi, Kenya  
**Faxes: + 254 2 33 7340 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

Mr Mwai Kibaki  
Minister of Health  
Ministry of Health  
PO Box 30016  
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 19 July 1991.