

EXTERNAL

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EXTRA 95/97

Fear for safety / Prisoners of conscience

7 July 1997

**KENYA Wafula Buke, human rights activist
Morris Ochieng
and one other man**

Wafula Buke, Morris Ochieng and one other man were arrested in Mombasa on the afternoon of 4 July 1997. The current whereabouts of all three are unknown, raising serious concern for their safety.

At the time of their arrest, the three were distributing leaflets calling on Kenyans to strike on 7 July to press the government to implement constitutional and legal reforms. They were initially taken to Makupa Police Station, Mombasa, and from there Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers removed them to an unknown destination. Human rights activists searched local police stations in Mombasa but security officials refused to divulge the whereabouts of the three men.

The detainees were not brought to court on 7 July, as required by law, and are now being held illegally. There is considerable concern for their safety.

There have been a number of deaths in police custody as a result of torture.

Wafula Buke works for the Kenya Human Rights Commission, a leading local human rights organization, which is currently running a campaign against police killings. Wafula Buke has been arrested on a number of occasions for his human rights activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The leaflets the three men were distributing were produced by the National Convention Executive Council (NCEC) and the Islamic Party of Kenya, an unregistered opposition party. The NCEC is the management committee of the National Convention, a non-governmental organization composed of different sectors of Kenyan society pushing for constitutional reform.

A number of different activities, including unlicensed rallies throughout the country, were planned for 7 July in memory of the banned pro-democracy demonstration *Saba Saba* (Seven Seven) in Nairobi on 7 July 1990, when 30 people were killed and over 1,500 arrested. These rallies were broken up violently by police, security officials and members of the youth wing of the ruling party Kenya African National Union (KANU) and there are reports of four people killed and many injured.

Similar peaceful pro-democracy rallies in Nairobi on 3 and 31 May 1997 were violently broken up by police and security forces and a number of people were injured.

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

- expressing concern about the arrest of Wafula Buke, Morris Ochieng and one other man, urging that they be released immediately as prisoners of conscience and protected from any form of torture or ill-treatment;
- expressing concern at police brutality and ill-treatment against peaceful demonstrators on 7 July;
- urging that democracy activists and human rights defenders be allowed to carry out their non-violent activities without fear of harassment and intimidation

APPEALS TO

Commissioner Duncan Wachira
Commissioner of Police, Police HQ,
PO Box 30083, Nairobi, Kenya
Telegrams: Police Commissioner Wachira, Nairobi, Kenya
Faxes: +254 2 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:

Kenya Human Rights Commission
PO Box 55235
Nairobi
Kenya

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 7 August 1997.