

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of ill-treatment/Legal concern

2 March 1993

MALAWI: Edmond Jika) opposition
Gabriel Nkunika) activists

Amnesty International is concerned at the arrest on 24 February 1993 of a second group of Malawian political exiles returning home to campaign in a referendum on a one-party or multi-party system.

Edmond Jika and Gabriel Nkunika, officials of the opposition United Front for Multi-Party Democracy (UFMD) - based in exile - were arrested at Kamuzu International Airport in Lilongwe on their return after some years in exile in Zambia. They are being held in police custody in Lilongwe, apparently without access to their families or their lawyer. They have been held without charge longer than the 24 hours permitted by law, and have not yet been brought to court despite their lawyer's demands. Political prisoners have in the past been subjected to ill-treatment and threats in police custody and prisons.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Three other Malawian exiles who returned home to campaign in the referendum due to be held on 14 June 1993 are also still detained without charge or trial - Shyley Kondowe and two others members of the South Africa-based Malawi Democratic Party (MDP) (see UA 39/93, AFR 36/14/93, 15 February 1993). A United Nations technical team from the UN's Department of Political Affairs had advised the government to release all political prisoners, allow exiles to return home safely, and guarantee the right to freedom of expression and association. Malawi is still officially a one-party state. Two internal opposition "pressure-groups" (Alliance for Democracy, AFORD, and the United Democratic Front, UDF) are being allowed to campaign for the referendum, though there have been frequent arrests, harassment and threats against their members. At the same time, the government and ruling Malawi Congress Party (MCP) appear determined to prevent the return of exile opposition groups to campaign in the referendum.

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

- expressing concern at the arrests at the airport in Lilongwe of Edmond Jika and Gabriel Nkunika on their return from Zambia on 24 February 1993;
- appealing for their immediate and unconditional release as prisoners of conscience who have been arrested for their peaceful opposition to the government, and for wishing to campaign for a multi-party political system in the referendum;
- urging that they be treated humanely in custody and given immediate and regular access to their families, lawyer and medical doctor if needed.

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency Life-President
Ngwazi Dr H. Kamuzu Banda
Office of the President
Private Bag 301
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Telegrams: Life-President Banda, Lilongwe, Malawi
Telexes: 44389 PRES MI or 44113 EXTERNAL MI
Faxes: + 265 782095 33 (please note new fax number)

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Mr John Tembo
Minister of the State
Office of the President
Private Bag 301
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Telegrams: State Minister Tembo, Lilongwe, Malawi
Telexes: 44389 PRES MI or 44113 EXTERNAL MI
Faxes: + 265 782095 33 (please note new fax number)

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr MacWilliam Lunguzi
Inspector-General of Police
Malawi Police Headquarters
Private Bag 305
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Telegrams: Inspector-General Police Lunguzi, Lilongwe, Malawi

Salutation: Dear Inspector-General

4) Mr Friday Makuta
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
Private Bag 333
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Telegrams: Justice Minister Makuta, Lilongwe, Malawi
Telexes: 44766 JUSTICE MI

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Viliiera
Attorney General
Attorney General's Chambers
Ministry of Justice
Private Bag 333
Lilongwe 3
Malawi

Mr Justice Richard Banda
Chief Justice
High Court of Malawi
Box 30244
Chichiri
Blantyre 3
Malawi

and to diplomatic representatives of Malawi accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 April 1993.