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NIGERIA

A 10-point program for human rights reform

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The present military government in Nigeria has a record of open contempt for human rights. A year ago it executed Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other supporters of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People after grossly unfair trials, prompting widespread international condemnation. Without the urgent establishment of respect for human rights, the transition to civilian rule by October 1998 announced by the Nigerian government should be viewed with deep scepticism by the international community. Piece-meal reforms in response to international pressure are not enough. A comprehensive and far-reaching program of human rights reform is urgently required. The international community, including transnational companies with significant investments in Nigeria, has a responsibility to do all it can to ensure full respect for human rights in Nigeria.

Amnesty International calls upon the present Nigerian government to implement the following 10-point program for human rights reform. It should:

- 1** Commit itself to establishing respect for human rights in Nigeria and to cooperating with the international community in this endeavour
- 2** Release immediately all prisoners of conscience - people imprisoned for their political or religious beliefs, sex or ethnic origin - who have neither used nor advocated violence, including those detained without charge or trial and those convicted and imprisoned after unfair political trials
- 3** End arbitrary detention. Revoke all military decrees which allow for the indefinite or incommunicado detention without trial of political prisoners, including the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984
- 4** Guarantee the fair and prompt trial of all political prisoners with full rights of defence, including the right of appeal to a higher and independent judicial body. Release all political prisoners detained indefinitely without charge or held in prolonged pre-trial detention unless they are to be brought to trial promptly and fairly.

- 5** Order a review by a higher and independent judicial body of all convictions and sentences by special tribunals which have tried political prisoners or which have imposed the death penalty, with a view to releasing or retrying prisoners if their trials did not conform to international fair trial standards and reforming such special tribunals to bring them into line with those standards - or abolishing them if this is impossible
- 6** End torture and ill-treatment, including medical neglect of prisoners and life-threatening prison conditions. Introduce adequate safeguards to prevent them in future, including full and immediate access for all prisoners to lawyers, families and medical services
- 7** Take action to prevent extrajudicial executions
- 8** Order independent and impartial investigations in accordance with international standards into all reported human rights violations, bring to justice all those responsible for such violations and compensate victims
- 9** Halt all executions and abolish the death penalty
- 10** Revoke the Federal Military Government (Supremacy and Enforcement of Powers) Decree, No. 12 of 1994, which effectively places the government above the law by prohibiting legal challenges to any of its military decrees or to any action which violates the human rights provisions of the Constitution

Amnesty International calls upon the international community, including transnational companies with significant investments in Nigeria, to:

- * Seek to ensure that human rights issues are addressed by the present Nigerian government as a matter of priority
- * Agree common and specific measures which the present Nigerian government must implement to establish respect for human rights
- * Ensure that military, security and police transfers of equipment, technology, training and personnel do not contribute to human rights violations in Nigeria
- * Support those working to defend human rights in Nigeria

For a fuller version of the 10-point program, see *Nigeria: Time to end contempt for human rights* (AI Index: AFR 44/14/96). For copies of this document, write to the organization's International Secretariat at 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, UK.
