

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 416/92 (AFR 51/05/92, 31 December 1992) - Death Penalty / Legal Concern / Fear of further executions

SIERRA LEONE: 26 people executed, including James Bambay Kamara, former Minister of State and Inspector General of Police and Lieutenant Colonel James Yaya Kanu

and new names: up to six people feared to be at risk of unfair trial and summary execution, including:

Lieutenant M.A. Jalloh

Lance Corporal S.S. Koroma, alias Solo Donde

Ahmed Sesay, student

and two people declared "wanted" in connection with the alleged coup attempt of 28 December 1992: Private Mohamed Osman Bangura

Lance Corporal Saidu Kargbo

Amnesty International fears that up to six people, including Lieutenant M.A. Jalloh, Lance Corporal S.S. Koroma and Ahmed Sesay, arrested following an alleged coup attempt on 28 December 1992, may be at imminent risk of summary execution following unfair trials before a special military tribunal. The organization is deeply concerned that these defendants may be tried, without legal representation, by a special military tribunal and, if found guilty, would be sentenced to death with no right of appeal against their convictions and sentences. Amnesty International is also concerned about two other members of the armed forces, Private Mohamed Osman Bangura and Lance Corporal Saidu Kargbo, declared "wanted" in connection with the alleged coup attempt of 28 December 1992, who may also, if arrested, be at risk of summary trial and execution.

A Sierra Leonean government communiqué of 31 December 1992 stated that two people - Lieutenant Jalloh and Lance Corporal Koroma - are awaiting trial by the special military tribunal in connection with the alleged coup attempt of 28 December 1992. Other reports indicate that a further four people, one of them a student, Ahmed Sesay, held in connection with the alleged coup attempt of 28 December 1992 may also face trial. The communiqué also stated that a reward has been offered for information leading to the arrest of two members of the armed forces, Private Mohamed Osman Bangura and Lance Corporal Saidu Kargbo, wanted in connection with the alleged coup attempt of 28 December 1992.

Amnesty International fears that, if arrested, they too would be at risk of summary execution following unfair trials before the special military tribunal.

The government communiqué of 31 December 1992 confirms that 26 people, including one woman, suspected of involvement in two separate coup attempts on 21 November and 28 December 1992, were executed in Freetown, Sierra Leone on 29 December 1992 (please note corrected date) following trials before a special military tribunal; trials which Amnesty International considers to have been grossly unfair. The communiqué stated that all 26 defendants were found guilty of treason and sentenced to death by firing squad. Their sentences were endorsed by the confirming authority of the National Provisional Ruling Council (also known as the Supreme Council of State), the military government which seized power in April 1992. The Council ordered that the executions should take place immediately. Those executed included 17 military and police personnel, and

nine civilians, including a journalist and a woman.

According to reports, the new military tribunal, set up by decree in mid-December 1992, has the power to try a range of offences including treason, murder, armed robbery, arson and sabotage. It comprises four army or police officers, presided over by an army officer of the rank of lieutenant colonel or above, and assisted by a legal advisor. Defendants reportedly have the right to a defence lawyer. However, according to a local human rights organization in Sierra Leone, neither a legal advisor nor defence lawyers were present at the hearing of the 26 people tried by the special military tribunal and subsequently executed on 29 December 1992. Amnesty International is also particularly concerned that the defendants were given no opportunity to exercise their internationally-recognized right of appeal to a higher, independent jurisdiction.

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

- reiterating dismay at the summary execution of 26 people in Freetown on 29 December 1992 following unfair trials before a special military tribunal;
- expressing concern at reports that up to six other people, including Lieutenant M.A. Jalloh, Lance Corporal S.S. Koroma and student, Ahmed Sesay, arrested following an alleged coup attempt on 28 December 1992, may also be at imminent risk of summary execution following unfair trials before the same military tribunal;
- expressing concern that, if arrested, two members of the armed forces, Private Mohamed Osman Bangura and Lance Corporal Saidu Kargbo appear also to be at risk of summary execution following unfair trials before the special military tribunal;
- urging the government to ensure that anyone charged in connection with criminal acts be given a fair trial in conformity with international standards;
- calling for any death sentences passed by the courts to be commuted.

APPEALS TO:

1) Captain Valentine E. Strasser
Chairman
Supreme Council of State
National Provisional Ruling Council
State House
Independence Avenue
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Salutation: Dear Captain Strasser

Telegrams: Captain Strasser, Chairman NPRC, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Telexes: 3230

2) Lieutenant Solomon A.J. Musa
Vice-Chairman
Supreme Council of State
National Provisional Ruling Council
State House
Independence Avenue
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Salutation: Dear Lieutenant Musa

Telegrams: Lieutenant Musa, Vice-Chairman NPRC, Freetown, Sierra Leone

Telexes: 3230

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Arnold Bishop-Gooding
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

Ministry of Justice
Guma Building
Lamina Sankoh Street
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Captain Julius Maada Bio
Liaison officer for Finance, Foreign Affairs and Information
State House
Independence Avenue
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Human rights organization
Society for the Preservation of Human Rights in Sierra Leone
PMB 915
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Newspapers:

Daily Mail, PO Box 53, Freetown, Sierra Leone
The Chronicle, 42B Waterloo Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone
For Di People, 1 Short Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone
The Globe, 14a Lightfoot Boston Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone
The New Citizen, 5 Hannah Benka-Coker Street, Freetown, Sierra Leone
The Vision, 60 Old Railway Line, Brookfields, Freetown, Sierra Leone

and to diplomatic representatives of Sierra Leone accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 22 February 1993.

