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Amnesty International News Flash

Togo: Meeting between Amnesty International and the Togolese ambassador to the United States

In London, late in the afternoon of 18 October, Amnesty International met the Togolese ambassador to the United States, Pascal A. Bodjoma, to raise the matter of the human rights situation in Togo.

This meeting, which was attended by the Secretary General of Amnesty International, Pierre Sané, among others, took place after an open letter from the organisation to the Togolese authorities had been despatched the same day. In the letter, Amnesty International stressed that it was open to dialogue and reiterated that human rights are not negotiable. The letter was sent in a desire for transparency after Amnesty International had received a number of approaches since the publication of its report on Togo last May from "intermediaries" or persons claiming to be "close" to the Togolese authorities.

During the 90-minute meeting, Amnesty International welcomed the repeated commitment of the Togolese ambassador that his government would at the earliest opportunity invite an international committee of inquiry set up by the United Nations to throw some light on human rights violations in Togo. The Secretary General of Amnesty International recalled that the committee was to be set up and invited by the Togolese government to carry out an investigation, respecting the international criteria of independence and impartiality. It was also recorded that, to date, the United Nations had still not received the Togolese government's letter inviting the committee to carry out its

investigations in Togo.

Amnesty International also raised the issue of the fate of human rights defenders and the organisation stressed that the accusations against them should be lifted.

The ambassador also broached the subject of the possible appearance of Pierre Sané before the Togolese courts and acknowledged that this summons was prejudicial to the action of Amnesty International in Togo.

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