

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 62/03/92

Distr: UA/SC

18 February 1992

UA 58/92 Possible Extrajudicial Execution / Legal Concern

ZAIRE: At least 13 people killed by government troops during religious demonstration

Amnesty International has received reports that at least 13 people were killed by troops of President Mobutu's elite Special Presidential Division (DSP) during a peaceful demonstration organised by priests and members of the Roman Catholic church in the capital, Kinshasa, on Sunday 16 February 1992.

The troops apparently used rifles, hot-water cannon, metal-tipped whips and tear gas to break up a peaceful march of demonstrators carrying prayer books and candles after church services to call for "peace and hope". Demonstrators also called for the resumption of the National Conference to debate political reform which was suspended in January 1992.

Eyewitnesses said that after the shootings at least 13 bodies were carried to the General Hospital and St Joseph's church in Matonge district which was later sealed off by armed cars. Official government sources give the number of dead as 17; opposition reports indicate that up to 45 were killed. More than one hundred others are reported to have been injured. Several church leaders were also reportedly arrested, including two Belgian Priests who were later expelled from the country.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The National Conference, comprising several hundred Zairian political groups was set up in August 1991 to review and reform Zaire's political system. Government opponents and Zaire's main trading partners, the United States, Belgium and France, have prevailed upon the government to resume the conference.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters in FRENCH, if possible:

- expressing concern at reports that on 16 February, troops opened fire on unarmed and peaceful demonstrators, killing and wounding dozens of them;
- expressing concern at the reported arrest of several church leaders and calling for their immediate release unless they are to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offenses;
- demanding an immediate independent inquiry into the incident and calling for those responsible for human rights violations to be brought to justice.
- requesting the authorities to establish strict guidelines for the use of lethal force in accordance with international standards and to issue public instructions to all members of the security forces that human rights violations, including the killing of unarmed

civilians, are criminal offenses and that those responsible should be brought to justice;

- seeking assurances that those taken into detention are not being ill-treated and will be allowed prompt access to their relatives and to legal counsel.

APPEALS TO:

1) President:

Son Excellence le Maréchal
MOBUTU Sese Seko
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema
République du Zaïre

Telegrams: President Mobutu, Kinshasa, Zaïre

Telexes: 21368

Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

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2) Prime Minister:

Monsieur Nguza Karl-i-Bond
Premier Ministre
Hotel du Conseil exécutif
Kinshasa-Gombe
République du Zaïre

Telexes: 21368

Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre / Dear Prime Minister

3) Minister of Justice and Attorney General:

Monsieur Mobuka
Ministre de la Justice et
Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
BP 3137
Kinshasa-Gombe
République du Zaïre

Telexes: 2136

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

4) Minister of Defence:

Monsieur Ngbanda Nzambo ko Atumba
Ministre de la Défense nationale,
la Sécurité du territoire et des
Anciens combattants
Ministère de la Défense
BP 3137
Kinshasa-Gombe

République du Zaïre

Telexes: 2136 DDNZR

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Minister of the Interior:

Monsieur Mandungu Bula Nyati
Ministre de l'Interieur et
Développement communautaire,
Hotel du Conseil exécutif
Kinshasa-Gombe
République du Zaïre

Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces:

Monsieur le Général
MAHELE Liyeko Bokungu
Chef d'Etat-Major Général des
Forces armées Zairoises (FAZ)
Ministère de la Défense nationale
Kinshasa-Ngaliema
République du Zaïre

Presidential adviser:

Maitre NIMY Mayidika Ngimbi
Conseiller spécial du Chef d'Etat
en matière de sécurité
Présidence de la République
Kinshasa-Ngaliema
République du Zaïre

Newspapers:

Elima BP 10017 Kinshasa-Limete, Zaïre
La Semaine 138 Avenue Wagenia, BP 15116, Kinshasa 1, Zaïre
Le Potential 2 Avenue Msi-Manimba, BP 11338, Kinshasa, Zaïre

- and to diplomatic representatives of Zaïre in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 31 March 1992.