

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 52/94 Extrajudicial executions/torture/death in custody 15 February 1994

CAMEROON: Harouna Yeya, chief from village of Koudougouni
Issa Ambare, chief from village of N'Djamena (Cameroon)
Salleh Adoum, from village of N'Djamena
Malloum Eli
Harouna Djidda, aged 45
Allakhou Mahmat, cattle-breeder (*éleveur*)
Issa Mahmat, aged 35
Abdoulaye Moussa
Ahmed Abdoulaye
and at least 12 others, including four Chadians (names unknown)

Amnesty International has received disturbing reports of the arrests, torture and deliberate and arbitrary killings of Shua Arabs (*Arabes Choa*) by security forces in the Department of Logone and Shari (*Département du Logone et Chari*) in the far north of Cameroon during January 1994. In view of these reports, the organization fears for the physical safety of other Shua Arabs arrested in recent weeks.

On 18 January nine members of the security forces were killed during an ambush, apparently by armed bandits, in the area of Logone Birni near the border with Chad. The government claimed, however, that Chadian dissidents were responsible for the attack. Several Shua traditional chiefs were subsequently arrested by the security forces; the governor of Far-North Province said that others suspected of complicity in the ambush had also been arrested. Some appear to have been denounced by members of the Kotoko ethnic group which is involved in a conflict with the Shua Arabs. Harouna Yeya, Issa Ambare, and Salleh Adoum were among those arrested in connection with the incidents in Logone Birni. All three were arrested on 24 January. Malloum Eli, arrested around the same time, is reported to have died as a result of torture at a military barracks in the village of N'Djamena (in Cameroon, distinct from the capital of Chad).

In an apparently unrelated incident, other Shua Arabs including Harouna Djidda, Allakhou Mahmat and Issa Mahmat, were reported to have been arrested by the security forces near the village of Afadé on 21 January. They were subsequently taken to Kousséri and then to Waza. Both Harouna Djidda and Allakhou Mahmat are reported to have died during the days which followed after being beaten and tortured with cigarette lighters and burning plastic bags. Issa Mahmat was reported to have been summarily shot on 23 January.

At least a dozen others including Abdoulaye Moussa, Ahmed Abdoulaye and four Chadians whose names are not known, were arrested in the area of Kousséri and transferred to Maroua. The precise dates and circumstances of their arrest are not known, but according to reports, they have been denied food and there are fears for their health and physical safety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These incidents have occurred in the context of a long-running conflict between Shua Arabs and the Kotoko ethnic group which has claimed hundreds of lives in recent years. Security forces have been deployed in the far north to control attacks by armed bandits (*coupeurs de route*). However, Kotoko and Shua Arabs have each blamed the other for these attacks and security forces appear to have made indiscriminate arrests in an attempt to restore order to the area.

A peace agreement signed by leaders of the two communities in September 1993 specified that members of the security forces responsible for maintaining order in the Department of Logone and Shari should be from other parts of the country.

Despite the peace agreement, fighting between the two groups has continued, resulting in further deaths.

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

- expressing serious concern about reports that Shua Arabs were tortured and extrajudicially executed by the security forces in the Department of Logone and Shari in January 1994;
- requesting clarification of the reports that Malloum Eli, Harouna Djidda and Allakhou Mahmat died as a result of torture and Issa Mahmat was deliberately killed in custody;
- urging that all detainees be protected from torture and ill-treatment and requesting an impartial investigation into allegations of torture and ill-treatment and for those responsible to be brought to justice;
- urging an end to deliberate and arbitrary killings by the security forces, pointing out that those in charge of security forces should ensure that officers under their command do not commit extrajudicial executions;
- expressing concern that some of those detained appear to have been arbitrarily arrested because of their ethnic origin and urging the release of any against whom there is no evidence of any offence.

APPEALS TO

1) President:

Son Excellence Monsieur Paul Biya
Président de la République
Palais de l'Unité, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Telegrams: President Biya, Yaounde, Cameroon

Faxes: + 237 221699

**Telexes: 8207 PRESID KN (Secretariat général)
8595 PRESID B KN (Cabinet civil)**

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République/Dear President

2) Prime Minister:

Mr Simon Achidi Achu
Prime Minister
Prime Minister's Office
Immeuble Etoile, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Telegrams: Prime Minister Achu, Yaounde, Cameroon

Faxes: + 237 235765

Telexes: 8282 KN

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister/Monsieur le Premier Ministre

3) Deputy Prime Minister in charge of Internal Affairs:

M. Gilbert Andzé Tsoungui
Vice-Premier Ministre chargé de l'Administration territoriale
Ministère de l'Administration territoriale
1000 Yaoundé 4, Cameroon

Telegrams: Vice Premier Ministre Tsoungui, Yaounde, Cameroon

Salutation: Monsieur le Vice Premier Ministre/Dear Deputy Prime Minister

4) Minister Delegate at the Presidency in charge of Defence

M. Edouard Akame Mfoumou
Ministre délégué à la Présidence chargé de la Défense

Palais de la Présidence
1000 Yaoundé, Cameroon

Telegrams: Ministre délégué Defense, Presidence, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Faxes: + 237 221699

Telexes: 8207 PRESID KN (Secretariat général)

8595 PRESID B KN (Cabinet civil)

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre délégué / Dear Minister Delegate

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Governor of Far-North Province

Monsieur Mounchipou Seidou

Gouverneur de la Province de l'Extrême-Nord

Palais de Gouvernance, 43000 Maroua, Cameroon

Cameroon Post, BP 1981, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Peuple d'Afrique, BP 1287, Yaoundé, Cameroon

La Gazette, BP 5485, Douala, Cameroon

Dikalo, BP 12656, Douala, Cameroon

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 March 1994.