

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 100/93 Fear of torture/Legal concern/Medical concern

6 April 1993

CAMEROON: Some 150 members and supporters of opposition political parties including:

Dr Victorin François Hameni Bieleu, president of the Union des forces démocratiques du Cameroun (UFDC), Union of Democratic

Forces of Cameroon

Dr André Kekuine, Secretary General of the UFDC

Amnesty International is concerned about the safety of some 150 members and supporters of opposition political parties who have been held incommunicado since their arrests on 31 March and 1 April 1993.

On 31 March 1993, during a regular weekly meeting, the headquarters in Yaoundé of the Union des forces démocratiques du Cameroun (UFDC), Union of Democratic Forces of Cameroon, were raided by officers of the gendarmerie and the Brigade Mixte Mobile, the security police. About 100 people, including the UFDC's president, Dr Victorin François Hameni Bieleu, and its secretary general, Dr André Kekuine, were arrested.

Dr Hameni Bieleu and others were reported to have been beaten at the time of their arrest.

The following day, 1 April 1993, a further 50 supporters of opposition parties, including the Social Democratic Front (SDF), were reported to have been arrested in Yaoundé.

No reason for their detention was given and they are not known to have been charged with any offence. They are held in the barracks of the Presidential Guard (caserne de la Garde présidentielle) at Ekounou, a few kilometres from Yaoundé, which is not a regular place of detention. They were denied food and water until 2 April 1993 and have not been allowed any visits from family or lawyers. There are fears that they may be tortured or ill-treated while held in incommunicado detention. Medical treatment has been denied to those who were beaten at the time of their arrest and Dr Hameni Bieleu, who is diabetic, has not been allowed to receive the medication he urgently requires.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In October 1992 President Paul Biya was re-elected, narrowly defeating his main rival, John Fru Ndi of the SDF. Amid reports of widespread electoral fraud, the SDF said that it would not accept the results. Following riots in Bamenda, the provincial capital, the government imposed a state of emergency in North-West province on 27 October 1992. Hundreds of people, mostly SDF supporters, were then detained without charge or trial in Bamenda and other towns. Following international pressure the government lifted the state of emergency in late December and most detainees were released. Many had been systematically beaten and tortured; one detainee died in November 1992 as a result of torture. Dr Hameni Bieleu who had been campaign manager for the SDF during the presidential elections, was arrested in November 1992 and

held until the end of December 1992. He was again briefly detained on 17 March 1993 in Yaoundé.

The Union for Change (Union pour le changement), a coalition of opposition political parties including the UFDC and the SDF, planned weekly demonstrations during March 1993 to protest against the government of President Biya. On 18 March 1993 peaceful demonstrators were arrested in Yaoundé, Douala and Bafoussam. There were further demonstrations on 25 March 1993. Three people were killed and more than 20 wounded when the gendarmerie opened fire on demonstrators in Bafoussam and as many as 60 people were arrested. They are believed to have been released shortly afterwards.

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

- expressing concern that some 150 people, including Dr Victorin François Hameni Bieleu and Dr André Kekuine, are reported to have been arrested in Yaoundé on 31 March and 1 April 1993 and are being held in the barracks of the Presidential Guard (casernes de la Garde présidentielle) at Ekounou;

- urging they be safeguarded from torture and ill-treatment and be given all necessary medical care as well as full access to their families and lawyers;

- urging that they be immediately released as they are prisoners of conscience, detained because of their non-violent opposition to the government.

APPEALS TO

1) President:

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

**Salutation: Monsieur le Président
de la République /
Dear President**

Telegrams: President Biya, Yaounde, Cameroon
Faxes: + 237 221699
Telexes: 8207 PRESID KN (Secretariat général)
8595 PRESID B KN (Cabinet civil)

2) Prime Minister:

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

**Salutation: Dear Prime Minister /
Monsieur le Premier Ministre**

Telegrams: Prime Minister Achu, Yaounde, Cameroon
Faxes: + 237 235765
Telexes: 8282 KN

3) Minister of Internal Affairs:

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

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/
Dear Minister**

Telegrams: Ministre Administration territoriale Tsoungui, Yaoundé, Cameroon

4) Secretary of State:

M. Jean Fochivé

Salutation: Monsieur le Secrétaire

Secrétaire d'Etat à
la Sécurité intérieure
Yaoundé, Cameroon

d'Etat /
Dear Secretary of State

Telegrams: M. Fochivé, Sécurité intérieure, Yaoundé, Cameroon

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

any of the following newspapers:

Cameroon Tribune, BP 1218, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Cameroon Post, BP 1981, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Peuple d'Afrique, BP 1287, Yaoundé, Cameroon
L'Expression, BP 5646, Douala, Cameroon
La Gazette, BP 5485, Douala, Cameroon
Dikalo, BP 12656, Douala, Cameroon
Challenge Nouveau, BP 13088, 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 18 May 1993.