

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 17/04/99

16 February 1999

Further information on UA 07/98 (AFR 17/01/98, 8 January 1998) - and follow-ups (AFR 17/03/98, 15 January 1998; AFR 17/04/98, 4 March 1998; AFR 17/06/98, 15 April 1998; AFR 17/08/98, 26 June 1998; AFR 17/10/98, 13 August 1998, AFR 17/13/98, 16 October 1998, AFR 17/17/98, 7 December 1998) - Prisoner of conscience / Health Concern / Cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment

CAMEROON Michel Michaut Moussala, journalist, director of the newspaper *Aurore Plus*

Michel Michaut Moussala was conditionally released by the Court of Appeal on 4 February 1999 after serving five months of his six-month prison term. He is scheduled to appear again before the Court of Appeal on 1 April 1999.

He was convicted of defamation (*diffamation*) in January 1998 and sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine, and arrested and imprisoned in September 1998. The charges related to an article published in the newspaper *Aurore Plus* accusing a National Assembly member of the ruling *Rassemblement démocratique du peuple camerounais*, Cameroon People's Democratic Movement, of corruption (*détournement de fonds publics*) and other criminal offences.

Amnesty International considered Michel Michaut Moussala to be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned solely because of his legitimate professional activities and in violation of his right to freedom of expression.

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

- welcoming the release of Michel Michaut Moussala on 4 February 1999 but urging that his release be made unconditional;
- reminding the government of Cameroon of its obligation to guarantee freedom of expression, under Article 19 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which it ratified in 1984, and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression".

APPEALS TO:

President

Son Excellence M. Paul Biya
Président de la République, Palais de l'Unité
1000 Yaoundé, République du Cameroun

Telegrams: Président, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Faxes: + 237 20 33 06

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

Minister of Justice

M. Laurent Ezzo
Ministre de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice, 1000 Yaoundé, République du Cameroun

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of Communication

M. René Zé Nguélé
Ministre de la Communication, Ministère de la Communication
1000 Yaoundé, République du Cameroun

Telegrams: Ministre Communication, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Dr Solomon Nfor Gwei, President, National Commission on Human Rights and
Freedoms, PO Box 20317, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Aurore Plus, BP 7042, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Le Messager, BP 5925, 226 Boulevard de la Liberté, Douala, Cameroon

La Nouvelle Expression, BP 15333, 12 rue Prince de Galles, Douala, Cameroon

Cameroon Post, BP 1981, Yaoundé, Cameroon

The Herald, BP 3659 Messa, Yaoundé, Cameroon

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or you section office, if sending appeals after 30 March 1999.