

1 April 1998

Further information on UA 371/97 (AFR 17/28/97, 27 November 1997) - Fear of refoulement / Legal Concern

CAMEROON/EQUATORIAL GUINEA Alfonso Mbá Nsogo Ntongono
Pedro Esono Masié
José Abeso Nsúe Nchama
Fabian Asumu Ondó
Santiago Biyang Nsang
Santiago Esono Osa
Miguel Francisco Eyegue
Angel Abeso
Laban Obama Abeso
Celestino Ebendeng
Juan Ondo Abaga
Bartolomé Ntutumu

The twelve above-named Equatorial Guinean nationals remain in incommunicado detention more than six months after their arrest. There are concerns that they may still be at risk of forcible *refoulement* to Equatorial Guinea where they could face serious human rights violations in a country where torture and ill-treatment, particularly of political detainees, are routine. Their conditions of detention are reportedly harsh.

The 12 men were arrested on 23 September 1997 in villages in South Province in Cameroon, close to the border with Equatorial Guinea. They were initially taken to the provincial capital, Ebolowa. Subsequently they were taken to the capital, Yaoundé, where they are being held by a special unit of the security forces known as the *Groupement spécial d'opérations* (GSO), Special Operations Group. They are not known to have been ill-treated since their arrest.

None of the men has been charged with any offence and the reasons for their continued detention are unclear.

The 12 men are members of opposition political parties in Equatorial Guinea. Alfonso Mbá Nsogo Ntongono and Fabian Asumu Ondó are members of the *Unión Popular* (Popular Union); the party affiliation of the others is not known. At least eight of the detainees have been granted refugee status by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Cameroon.

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

- expressing concern that these 12 Equatorial Guinean nationals have been held for more than six months without charge and requesting clarification of the reasons for their continued detention; if they are not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence, they should be immediately and unconditionally released;
- urging that they be allowed immediate access to members of their families, a lawyer and a doctor and that they be held in conditions which conform to international standards for the treatment of prisoners;
- expressing concern that these 12 men, if forcibly returned to Equatorial Guinea, would be at serious risk of torture and ill-treatment;
- urging the Cameroon authorities to respect the principle of *non-refoulement*, in accordance with their obligations under international refugee law, and not to forcibly return these 12 men to Equatorial Guinea.

APPEALS TO:

Minister of Justice

M. Laurent Easo
Ministre de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
1000 Yaoundé, Cameroon

Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Yaounde, Cameroon
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Secretary of State for National Security

M. Luc René Bell
Secrétaire d'Etat à la Sûreté nationale
Sûreté nationale
1000 Yaoundé, Cameroon

Salutation: Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat / Dear Minister of State

Minister of the Interior

M. Samson Ename Ename
Ministre de l'Administration territoriale
Ministère de l'Administration territoriale
1000 Yaoundé 4, Cameroon

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Minister of Foreign Affairs

M. Augustin Kontchou Kouomegni
Ministre d'Etat chargé des Relations étrangères
Ministère des Relations étrangères
1000 Yaoundé, Cameroon

Faxes: + 237 20 11 33 (if voice, say "je voudrais envoyer un fax, s'il vous plaît)

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre/ Dear Minister

COPIES 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 12 May 1998.