

PUBLIC

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**Further Information on UA 249/06 (AFR 19/005/2006, 15 September 2006) Arbitrary arrest /
incommunicado detention / Fear of torture or ill-treatment**

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	Reymond Béhourou (m) Marcel Bagaza (m) Barthélemy Boguina (m) Tom Mahamat (m) Roger Yamokoa (m) Joseph Kada (m) Georges Djungon (m) Elysée Doléance Tamkimadji (m) Serge Radas Dilkake (m) Honoré Mberna (m) Clémenceau Dorkem (m) Jacques Mobeang (m) Aimé Natayo (m) Raïkina Mamadou (m) Clotilde Gamo (f)
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Amnesty International has received confirmation that the 14 men named above were released from custody on 25 September. Clotilde Gamo is also reported to have come out of hiding and is not thought to be sought by the authorities.

The men were all taken illegally by Presidential Security personnel from Ngaragba central prison in the capital, Bangui, on 13 September. One of the released prisoners has told Amnesty International that they were taken to Bossembelé civilian prison in Ombella-Mpoko province (*préfecture*). The prison provided no bedding or food for the prisoners, who remained hungry for nearly three days. On the third day, the prisoners' relatives learned of their whereabouts and brought them food. The former prisoner said they were not physically ill-treated.

On the morning of 25 September, a prison official informed the prisoners that they were to be returned to Bangui. From Bossembelé, the prisoners were escorted by members of the Presidential Security. On arrival in Bangui they were briefly held at the National Gendarmerie's *Section de recherche et d'investigation* (SRI), Research and Investigation Section. Thereafter they were taken to Ngaragba prison where they were issued with release certificates. They were taken to the Procuracy from where they were released.

While the prisoners were being held in Bossembelé, members of the Central African Republic Bar Association (including the prisoners' defence lawyers) went on strike and refused to represent defendants in the courts. The pressure by the lawyers and human rights organizations is thought to have contributed to the prisoners' release. A leading human rights defender and one of the released prisoners expressed gratitude for Amnesty International's support.

While welcoming the prisoners' release, Amnesty International is concerned about reports that some of the defence lawyers and human rights defenders have received threats from members of the security forces. The organization is further concerned that the authorities have not taken any action against the security and other authorities responsible for the arbitrary arrest and unlawful detention of the prisoners.

No further action is required at this stage from the Urgent Action Network. Amnesty International wishes to thank all those who sent appeals on behalf of the prisoners.