

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 24/08/95  
Distr: UA/SC

UA 120/95

Legal concern / Fear of torture

25 May 1995

**EQUATORIAL GUINEA Elvira Lawson Otavenga (f), wife of Juan Nzo  
Juan Nzo, vice secretary general of the *Convergencia para la Democracia Social*  
(CPDS), *Convergence for Social Democracy***  

---

**Rafael Obiang, a leader of the *Convergencia Social Demócrata Popular*, (CSDP),  
Social Democratic and Popular Convergence**

Elvira Lawson Otavenga, wife of political leader Juan Nzo, has been arrested, apparently for no other reason than to force her husband to come out of hiding.

Amnesty International is extremely concerned by her detention, and for the safety of her husband if he is found and arrested.

On 7 May, Juan Nzo, Vice Secretary General of the *Convergencia para la Democracia Social* (CPDS), *Convergence for Social Democracy*, returned from Spain and had newspapers, books and computer diskettes confiscated by the airport authorities. The following day he went to the police station to recover his property and was arrested after he refused to sign a statement saying that he had introduced subversive material in the country. He was released two days later. However, a week later he was summoned to appear before the military jurisdiction to be questioned but he refused and demanded that full details of the reason for his summoning be given in writing.

On 22 May Juan Nzo went into hiding after hearing that a police patrol was looking for him. Apparently the police said that Juan Nzo would be beaten when found and that he would face charges.

Elvira Lawson Otavenga was arrested on 23 May at her home in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea on Bioko Island. She was forced to leave her 14-month-old baby in the house unattended.

In a separate incident, Rafael Obiang, a leader of the *Convergencia Social Demócrata Popular*, (CSDP), *Social Democratic and Popular Convergence*, was arrested, without a warrant, on 24 May at his home in Malabo by the Secretary of State for Security, for being in possession of "many" copies of *La Verdad* (The Truth), a monthly paper published by the CPDS.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Both the CPDS and CSDP are two of six opposition parties in the *Plataforma Oposición Conjunta* (POC), Joint Opposition Platform.

Since the beginning of 1995 scores of peaceful political activists have been arbitrarily arrested. Many have been tortured or ill-treated. Most were released after a few days or weeks.

Tension escalated after the government started to compile an electoral census prior to municipal elections which are now expected to be held in August or September 1995. In April 12 people (eight soldiers and four civilians) were convicted by a military court of plotting to overthrow the government. They were sentenced to terms of imprisonment ranging from 9 to 30 years. They had been severely tortured in pre-trial detention.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in Spanish or in your own language:**

- expressing concern about the detention of Elvira Lawson Otavenga who appears to have been taken hostage by the authorities to force her husband to give himself up;
- expressing concern about the unlawful arrest of Rafael Obiang who appears to have been arrested solely for his peaceful political activities;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released;
- expressing concern for the safety of Juan Nzo who went into hiding after he heard that the authorities would beat him, imprison and try him for "introducing subversive" material in the country;
- urging the authorities to issue clear public instructions to the security forces that human rights violations such as arbitrary arrests and the torture of prisoners will not be tolerated.

**APPEALS TO**

President

General de Brigada Teodoro Obiang Nguema  
 Presidente de la República  
 Gabinete del Presidente  
 Malabo

Guinea Ecuatorial

**Telegrams: Presidente Obiang Nguema, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial**

**Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG**

**Faxes: + 240 9 3313**

**Salutation: Su Excelencia/Your Excellency**

Minister of Justice

Francisco Javier Ndongo Mbengono  
 Ministro de Justicia y Culto  
 Ministerio de Justicia y Culto  
 Malabo

Guinea Ecuatorial

**Telegrams: Ministro de Justicia Ndongo Mbengono, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial**

**Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG**

**Faxes: + 240 9 2824**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/dear Minister**

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Miguel Oyono Ndong Mifumu  
 Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores  
 Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores  
 Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial

**Telegrams: Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores Oyono Ndong Mifumu, Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial**

**Telexes: 5405 GBNOM 5405 EG**

**Salutation: Excelentísimo Señor/dear Minister**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:** diplomatic representatives of Equatorial Guinea accredited to your country

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 14 July 1995.