

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Death Penalty

27 November 1992

EQUATORIAL GUINEA:

Norberto Ndong Abia

Norberto Ndong Abia, a member of the Presidential Security Guard, was sentenced to death by a military court in Bata, the capital of the Equatorial Guinea's mainland province of Río Muni, on 23 or 24 November 1992. He was convicted of shooting dead 22-year-old Pedro Ateba during an argument on 26 October 1992. Amnesty International does not have details of the trial.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pedro Ateba's death is the second arbitrary killing by security personnel reported within a month: Silverio Mba Okenve was shot dead by a member of the Presidential Security Guard on 22 November but Amnesty International does not know whether any arrest was made in this case. Amnesty International has frequently called upon the Equatorial Guinean authorities to implement international standards governing the conduct of security personnel, which the government has consistently failed to do. While recognizing that it is the government's duty to bring to justice those accused of committing human rights violations Amnesty International is totally opposed to the use of the death penalty.

No death sentences are known to have been passed for political offences since 1988 when two soldiers were sentenced to death, but had their sentences commuted, for allegedly attempting to overthrow the government. In May 1990 five people were sentenced to death for criminal offences. They too had their sentences commuted. Since then the organization has been told that several people convicted of criminal offences have been sentenced to death and executed; it has been unable to confirm those reports as details on ordinary criminal cases are not normally made public by the courts.

In Equatorial Guinea both ordinary and military courts are empowered to impose death sentences. However, people sentenced to death by a military court have no opportunity to exercise their internationally-recognized right of appeal.

Equatorial Guinea became a party to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1986 and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in 1987.

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

- expressing concern at the death sentence imposed on Norberto Ndong Abia on 23 or 24 November 1992;

- explaining Amnesty International's unconditional opposition to the death penalty on the grounds that it is not only a cruel, inhuman and degrading punishment, but is irreversible and is a violation of the right to life;

- urging the government to commute the death sentence to a more humane punishment such as a period of imprisonment;

- urging the authorities to implement international standards such as the UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials to prevent members of the security forces from committing deliberate and arbitrary killings.

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APPEALS TO:

1) President:

Su Excelencia

General de Brigada Teodoro Obiang Nguema

Presidente de la República

Gabinete del Presidente de la República

Malabo

República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Telegrams: President Obiang Nguema Malabo, República de Guinea Ecuatorial

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Salutation: Su Excelencia / Your Excellency

2) Minister of Justice and Religion:

Su Excelencia

Mariano Nsué Nguema

Ministro de Justicia y Culto

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3) Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Su Excelencia

Benjamín Mba Ekua Mikó

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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 8 January 1993.