

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 30/06/96

22 August 1996

Further information on UA 192/96 (AFR 30/03/96, 1 August) and follow-ups (AFR 30/04/96 of 15 August and AFR 30/05/96 of 16 August) - Fear of refoulement / ill-treatment / fear for safety

GUINEA-BISSAU Albert Mukesha Batwaro, Rwandese
Souleymane Diallo, from Guinea-Conakry
Sulaymane Souare, " " "
Alpha Mamadou Barry, " " "
Abubacar Sall, " " "
and other African nationals

On 20 August 1996, 46 men of various African nationalities, detained in Guinea-Bissau after being deported from Spain in mid-June 1996, resumed their hunger-strike after a four-day break.

The 45 men had begun the hunger-strike on 12 August. They were re-joined by a fellow-deportee who had gone into hiding after four of his countrymen had been effectively forced to return to Guinea-Conakry. They had suspended their hunger-strike on 16 August after they were reportedly given assurances that the Guinea-Bissau authorities were trying to find a solution to their problem. They resumed it amidst reports that the authorities were making arrangements to repatriate 40 of them and to find other countries of asylum for the one Rwandese and five Liberians.

A total of nine hunger-strikers who received hospital treatment between 14 and 16 August have returned to the *Segunda Esquadra* (Second Squadron) prison in the capital, Bissau. When they resumed their hunger strike they took their foam mattresses from their communal cell to the prison entrance where passers-by could see them. However, the public and the press have not been given permission to speak to them. They are reportedly refusing to eat, drink or take medicine.

Amnesty International remains concerned about the health and safety of the hunger-strikers and is calling on all relevant authorities to address their legitimate grievances. They did not have adequate opportunity to present their claims for asylum in Spain before being forcibly removed to Guinea-Bissau. Neither the four who were effectively forced to return to Guinea-Conakry nor any of the other 46 were given the opportunity to claim asylum in Guinea-Bissau.

Amnesty International fears that some of these people may be at risk of serious human rights violations if they are returned to their own countries. Guinea-Bissau is bound by international treaties to ensure that they are not repatriated either directly or indirectly to their own countries, that they are given the opportunity to seek asylum, and that their asylum applications are fairly considered.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please continue urgent appeals to the Guinea-Bissau and Spanish authorities as outlined in the Urgent Action update of 15 August 1996 (AFR 30/04/96).

APPEALS TO:

President of Guinea-Bissau
Sua Excelência João Bernardo Vieira

Presidente da República
Palácio da República
Praça dos Heróis Nacionais
Bissau, República da Guiné-Bissau
Faxes: + 245 20 2007 (quero enviar um fax, por favor)
Telexes: 251 pcr bi
Telegrams: Presidente Vieira, Bissau, Guiné-Bissau
Salutation: Excelência

Guinea-Bissau Minister of Foreign Affairs
Sua Excelência Fernando Delfim da Silva
Ministro dos Negócios Estrangeiros
Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros
Avenida Domingos Ramos
Bissau, República da Guiné-Bissau
Faxes: + 245 20 1542
Telegrams: Ministro Fernando Delfim da Silva, Bissau, Guiné-Bissau
Salutation: Excelência

Spanish Minister of the Interior
Excmo Sr D Jaime Mayor Oreja
Ministro del Interior
Ministerio del Interior
Castellana 5, Madrid, Spain
Faxes: +34 1 537 1003
Telegrams: Ministro del Interior, Madrid, Spain
Salutation: Sr Ministro / Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Guinea-Bissau and Spain accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 September 1996.