

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Prisoners of conscience

20 January 1995

KENYA Njenga Mungai, Member of Parliament (MP) for Molo
Dr Lawali Oyondi, MP for Nakuru Town, veterinary surgeon
Francis John Wanyange, MP for Nakuru East
John Njenga Mungai, driver and brother of Njenga Mungai
Mwangi Gikonyo, councillor from Longonot
Aomedoy Ondiala

The three opposition members of parliament (MPs) and three other people named above are currently being held in Nakuru prison. They were arrested on Sunday 15 January 1995 in Longonot, 90 kilometres from Nairobi, near the scene of recent political violence which claimed the lives of 10 people. The MPs were about to attend a church service with families of the victims. Amnesty International believes they are prisoners of conscience, detained for their non-violent opposition to the government. Their case is due to go to trial on 30 January.

On 15 January, police took the six named above to different police stations in the Rift Valley Province, where they were held until 17 January, when they were brought before the magistrate's court in Nakuru, 150 kilometres from Nairobi. There they were charged with promoting "warlike activities" and "uttering words with seditious intention". The six are accused of stating publicly at Nakuru bus stop that members of the Kalenjin ethnic group should leave Nakuru district by 16 January. All six have denied the charges, on the grounds that the incident never took place. They were denied bail on 20 January and are currently being held on remand at Nakuru Prison, where conditions are harsh.

Seven others members of opposition parties - two Ford-Kenya officials and five Democratic Party officials - who were also arrested at the church on 15 January, were released on 19 January on police bond. They had been held in incommunicado detention at Menengai police station beyond the legal limit of 24 hours.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These arrests appear to be part of a pattern of harassment of opposition figures, journalists and human rights activists who have been attempting to investigate incidents of political violence in the Rift Valley and other parts of Kenya. In the past a number have been charged with sedition, subversion or other criminal charges, but many have subsequently been given bail and charges later withdrawn.

Government involvement has been alleged in the ethnic-based violence. Since it began in December 1991, over 1,500 people have been killed and more than 300,000 have been displaced. In late December 1994, government authorities provoked international outrage when over 2,000 people displaced by the conflict were forcibly dispersed from a camp for internal refugees at Maela, 120 kilometres northwest of Nairobi.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest on 15 January 1995 of the individuals listed above and at their continuing detention;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released on the grounds

that they are prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for the non-violent expression of their political beliefs.

APPEALS TO

President Daniel arap Moi
Office of the President
PO Box 30510
Nairobi
Kenya

Telegrams: President Moi, Kenya

Telexes: 22003 FOREIGN ROB or 22796 FOREIGN RB

Faxes: +254 2 337340

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Amos Wako
Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
PO Box 40112
Nairobi
Kenya

Telegrams: Attorney General Wako, Nairobi, Kenya

Faxes: +254 2 211082

Salutation: Dear Attorney General

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Dr Willy Mutunga
Chairman
Law Society of Kenya
PO Box 72219
Nairobi
Kenya

and to diplomatic representatives of Kenya accredited to your country

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 February 1995.