

PUBLIC

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Further information on UA 05/99 (AFR 32/02/99, 11 January 1999) -
Ill-treatment/Fear for Safety

KENYA Wangari Maathai

Amnesty International has learned that Kenyan Attorney General Amos Wako has apologised to Greenbelt Movement leader Professor Wangari Maathai for the beating she received at the Karura forest demonstration on 8 January 1999. He has also ordered a full investigation into the incident, but according to the information received by Amnesty International no arrests have yet been made.

Police Commissioner Duncan Wachira has promised police protection for Professor Maathai at any future demonstrations at Karura forest. However on 18 January 1999 police refused access to the forest for a peaceful demonstration led by Professor Maathai.

Three Kenyan environmentalist opposition MPs have been arrested and charged with incitement to violence after several days of violent confrontation between university students and riot police. Three days of rioting erupted after students armed with stones arrived at Karura forest to demonstrate and plant seedlings and were met by police armed with riot control equipment newly purchased from South Africa. Violence spread to other parts of Nairobi, and there have been several reports of injuries.

Amnesty International is monitoring the situation, but no further action is required by the Urgent Action network at this time. Many thanks to all those who sent appeals.