

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Health concern

1 December 1994

KENYA

Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki, aged 28

Amnesty International is extremely concerned for the health of Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki, who is currently being held in Nakuru prison. He reportedly received serious head injuries as a result of torture by the police at the time of his arrest on 9 July 1994, but has not yet received any medical treatment for these injuries. Without immediate treatment he risks developing serious medical problems.

Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki was examined by a medical doctor on 20 July. He was suffering from headaches and eye pains and was reportedly disorientated. The doctor recommended that he urgently be given a CT (computerised axial tomography) brain scan, but he did not receive this until 14 October - three months later. The scan was reported to show a subdural haematoma, which would normally be treated immediately by an operation. However, the surgeon who then saw Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki requested a second opinion on the scan. A month later, this second opinion has not yet been received and Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki has not received any treatment.

Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki's general condition has improved, but if he does have a subdural haematoma his condition could deteriorate at any time. So much time has passed since the initial CT scan that it would now have little value in guiding treatment. Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki needs a second scan without delay, to be followed up immediately with an examination by a neurosurgeon and an operation if appropriate.

Amnesty International has frequently expressed concern in the past that political prisoners in Kenya have not received adequate and timely medical treatment and that doctors treating them have been harassed, obstructed and intimidated. Medical treatment of torture survivors has often been long delayed, causing them further serious medical problems.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki was held in incommunicado detention after his arrest until the 19 July when he was jointly charged with five others with robbery with violence and possession of firearms (see UA 270/94, AFR 32/10/94, 15 July and follow-ups). All six deny the charges and allege that they were tortured by the police shortly after their arrest. The case of the other five is proceeding without Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki, whose plea has not yet been heard because he is still awaiting medical treatment.

Amnesty International believes that the charges against Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki and some, if not all, of his co-accused may have been fabricated and that they may be prisoners of conscience arrested because of their connections with Koigi wa Wamwere (see UA 333/93 AFR 32/12/93, 21 September 1993 and UA 413/93, AFR 32/17/93, 23 November 1993). Koigi wa Wamwere, a prominent human rights activist, former member of parliament and a three-time former political prisoner, currently on trial for his life for attempted robbery with violence along with three other defendants. All four are prisoners of conscience.

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

- calling for Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki to receive a second CT scan without delay, to be followed immediately with an examination by a neurosurgeon and an operation if appropriate;
- expressing concern at the delays in Geoffrey Kuria Kariuki receiving appropriate examinations and subsequent medical treatment.

Please bring to the attention of Medical Coordinators.

APPEALS TO

President Daniel arap Moi
Office of the President
PO Box 30510
Nairobi, Kenya
Telegrams: President Moi, Kenya
Telexes: 22003 FOREIGN RB or 22796 FOREIGN RB
Faxes: + 254 2 337340
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Joshua Angatia
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health

PO Box 30016
Nairobi, Kenya
Telexes: 22003 FOREIGN RB or 22796 FOREIGN RB
Telegrams: Health Minister Angatia, Nairobi, Kenya
Salutation: Dear Minister

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

Mr James Mareka
Commissioner of Prisons
Kenya Prisons Service

Headquarters
PO Box 30175
Nairobi, Kenya
Telegrams: Prisons Commissioner Mareka, Nairobi, Kenya
Salutation: Dear Commissioner

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 8 January 1994.