

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 346/91

Fear for safety

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KENYA:

Raila ODINGA

Raila Odinga, a businessman and scientist, has publicly expressed fears for his life on account of his political views. He told journalists on 15 October 1991 of recent incidents where plainclothes police had burst into his office, an armed gang had banged on his door and shouted abuse, and anonymous death threats had been made on the telephone. He had earlier alleged that unidentified gunmen had shot at him while driving home on 10 September.

Raila Odinga, son of Oginga Odinga, a prominent government opponent and former Vice-President, has spent seven of the last eight years in administrative detention without charge or trial under Kenya's Public Security Regulations. In early June 1991 Amnesty International made urgent appeals on his behalf when he was seriously ill in Naivasha prison. (See UA 306/91, AFR 32/22/91, 13 June and Follow-up AFR 32/23/91, 24 June). He was released on 21 June but was refused permission to go abroad for medical tests for suspected heart disease: this was recommended by his doctor as the tests were not available in Kenya. His wife was later banned from accompanying their three children on a visit to Germany (where Raila Odinga had once studied).

In a press conference on 12 August 1991 Raila Odinga called for President Moi's resignation and the establishment of an interim government pending multi-party elections within a year, and he demanded the release of all political prisoners. He said he believed the reason for his previous detention had been his support for multi-party democracy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There have been several deaths and assaults of government critics and pro-democracy activists in Kenya in the last two years, as well as arrests and torture or ill-treatment of political prisoners. At least 30 demonstrators were killed by the riot police in July 1990 and there have been other less clear cases where involvement by the security police and government cover-ups have been alleged.

In June 1990 unidentified armed men attacked the Nairobi home of Kenneth Matiba, a leader of the "multi-party movement", and seriously injured his wife. He continued to criticise the government but was detained by administrative order the next month and held until April 1991. In February 1991 the human rights activist Gitobu Imanyara, editor of the Nairobi Law Monthly, was attacked in a Nairobi street by unknown assailants. He continued to publish his journal but the following month police arrested him for supposed "sedition" and he was held for nearly three months, when the charge was dropped. (See UA 79/91, AFR 32/09/91, 4 March and follow-ups AFR 32/11/91, 11 March; AFR 32/14/91, 23 April; AFR 32/16/91, 2 May; and AFR 32/17/91, 30 May.)

A long-running public inquiry into the death in February 1990 of the then Foreign Minister, Robert Ouko, who was abducted, tortured and murdered, allegedly after criticising government corruption, has still not thrown much light on the incident. Many questions also remain unanswered about the death in a car crash in August 1990 of Anglican Bishop Alexander Muge, an outspoken

critic of the government, who had expressed fears for his life after a government minister made a public death threat against him.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at recent threats against Raila Odinga's safety;
- expressing particular concern that he appears to be under threat from members of the security forces, even though the police are apparently keeping him under surveillance;
- urging that the authorities fully investigate allegations that he has been subjected to death threats and assaults, bring to justice those responsible, and make every effort to assure his safety.

APPEALS TO

President Daniel arap Moi
 President of the Republic of Kenya
 Office of the President
 P O Box 30510
 Nairobi, Kenya
Telegrams: President arap Moi, Kenya

Your Excellency

Mr Philip Kilonzo
 Commissioner of Police
 Kenya Police HQ
 PO Box 30083
 Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Commissioner

Telegrams: Police Commissioner Kilonzo, HQ Kenya Police, Nairobi, Kenya

Mr James Kanyotu
 Director of Dept of State Security Intelligence
 Kenya Police HQ
 PO Box 30083, Kenya

Dear Sir

Telegrams: Director Special Branch, Police HQ, Nairobi, Kenya

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

Dear Attorney General

Telegrams: Attorney General Wako, Nairobi, Kenya
Telexes: 22003 FOREIGNRB or 22696 FOREIGNRB
(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: + 254 2 33 7340 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Kenya in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat or your section office if sending appeals after 29 November 1991.