

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 111/91 Extrajudicial Executions/Legal Concern

25 March 1991

MALI: Bintou Maïga (f), court clerk
Bréhima Bériديو, sociology lecturer at the *Ecole normale supérieure*, teachers training college
both leading officials of the *Comité national d'initiative démocratique* (CNID), National Committee of Democratic Initiative

and over 20 others arrested and over 150 people killed

Over 150 people, including children, have been killed by the security forces during pro-democracy demonstrations and rioting which started in Bamako, the capital, on 22 March 1991. Many of those killed are said to have been shot in the back. Others were killed by the indiscriminate shooting of civilians on the streets. Amnesty International is calling on the Malian authorities to halt the killings immediately and to stop the army using lethal force against unarmed civilians where lives are not threatened.

On 22 March 1991 at least 40 people were killed when a student demonstration was blocked by the security forces and erupted into rioting, with government and commercial buildings being attacked and burned. The government immediately declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew.

On 23 March at least another 40 people were killed. Some were shot dead when thousands of women, protesting against the killings, tried to march on the President's residence at Koulouba in Bamako and were fired upon by the security forces. As many as 65 people were reported to have been burned to death when the security forces set fire with flame-throwers to a shopping and business centre where protestors had taken refuge. On 24 March mourners burying the dead at two cemeteries in Bamako were shot at by soldiers. The same day, the government met opposition leaders and agreed to demands to lift the state of emergency, free political prisoners and withdraw troops from the streets. On 25 March a general strike went ahead with opposition demands for President Moussa Traoré to resign, for the dissolution of the National Assembly and for the formation of a *Comité de salut public*, People's Salvation Committee, to act as a transitional government. Continuing unrest was reported in at least three districts of Bamako.

It has been estimated that some 150 people have been killed by the security forces and a number of police officers and soldiers killed by rioters. According to the authorities, only 34 people have died. Information about events outside Bamako has been difficult to obtain but there have been demonstrations in other towns and deaths were reported from Koulikoro on 24 March.

Two leading members of a leading pro-democracy organization, the *Comité national d'initiative démocratique* (CNID), National Committee of Democratic Initiative, were arrested at their homes on 23 March 1991. Bintou Maïga, a court clerk, and Bréhima Bériديو, a sociology lecturer at the *Ecole normale supérieure*, teachers training college, in Bamako, were reportedly still held without charge on 25 March. At least 20 others are reported to have been detained.

General Moussa Traoré has ruled Mali since seizing power in a coup in

1968. A number of large and peaceful pro-democracy demonstrations took place in late 1990. On 8 January 1991, General Sékou Ly, noted for the severity with which he suppressed strikes by students and teachers in 1979 and 1980, was brought back to head the Interior Ministry. On 18 January he ordered pro-democracy organizations to halt all political activity and, in demonstrations and riots in the next few days, at least five people were reportedly killed by the security forces. Some 140 people, mostly children and young people, were detained without charge or trial for 10 days and many, including children under 12 years of age, were tortured or ill-treated (see UA 32/91, AFR 37/01/91, 29 January, and AFR 37/02/91, 18 March). A number of students are reported to have been killed in student demonstrations in other parts of the country, in Sikasso and Samé near Kayes.

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

- expressing concern at reports that over 150 people have been killed and over 20 people detained by the security forces since 22 March 1991;
- calling on the Malian authorities to halt the killings immediately and to issue orders to the army that lethal force may not be used against civilians unless the civilians themselves are using or threatening to use violence which may result in loss of life;
- urging that an immediate, independent and open inquiry into the killings be instituted to establish whether the killings were lawful and whether they could have been avoided;
- appealing for the release of prisoners of conscience - those held for the non-violent expression of their political views - and for the immediate release of any detainees who are not to be charged promptly with a recognizably criminal offence and formally remanded in custody;
- urging that all detainees be safeguarded from torture or ill-treatment, held in accordance with international standards on conditions of imprisonment and given immediate access to their families and lawyers.

APPEALS TO:

Son Excellence
Monsieur le Général Moussa Traoré
Président de la République
La Présidence
B.P. 1463
Bamako, Mali

Telegrams: President, Bamako, Mali

Faxes: +223 22 3980

Telexes: 2521 PREMALI MJ

Monsieur le Général Sékou Ly
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Bamako, Mali

Telegrams: Ministre Interieur, Bamako, Mali

Monsieur le Général Mamadou Coulibaly
Ministre de la Défense nationale
Ministère de la Défense nationale
B.P. 215
Bamako, Mali

Telegrams: Ministre Defense, Bamako, Mali

Monsieur le Lieutenant-Colonel Sambou Soumaré

Ministre de la Justice et Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
B.P. 97
Bamako, Mali
Telegrams: Ministre Justice, Bamako, Mali

COPIES TO:

Son Excellence Monsieur le Docteur N'Golo Traoré
Ministre des Affaires étrangères
Ministère des Affaires étrangères
Koulouba
Bamako, Mali
Faxes: +223 22 5226

- *Les Echos*, BP 2043, Bamako, Mali
- *Aurore*, BP 3150, Bamako, Mali
- *L'Essor*, BP 141, Bamako, Mali
- *Le Cafard Libéré*, BP 7292, Dakar, Senegal

and to diplomatic representatives of Mali in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 May 1991.