

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 64/95 (AFR 44/01/95, 14 March 1995) - Legal and health concern/prisoners of conscience/fear of death penalties

NIGERIA:General (Retd) Olusegun Obasanjo, former head of state
Brigadier-General Lawan Gwadabe, 46, GOC 23rd Armoured Brigade
Major-General (Retd) Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, former deputy head of state
Bayo Onanuga, editor-in-chief, *The News* newspaper group
new names:Chief A.M. Adisa Akinloye, 78, former Chairman, National Party of Nigeria
Chief Titi Ajanaku (f), former chairperson, Abeokuta North Local Government Council
Shehu Sanni, Vice-Chairman, Campaign for Democracy
Lieutenant-Colonel Happy Kefas Bulus, Nigerian Defence Academy, Kaduna
Colonel Bello Fadile, Director of Legal Services, Defence Headquarters
Colonel Emmanuel Ndubueze, General Staff, 3rd Armoured Division, Jos
Lieutenant-Colonel I. Shuaibu, Military School, Zaria
and at least 30 others

Amnesty International is concerned at the continued detention, without charge or trial, of detainees accused of involvement in a coup plot whose existence is increasingly doubted. There is particular concern for the health of 78-year-old Chief Meredith Adisa Akinloye, who has reportedly been held incommunicado and without access to required medication for high blood pressure at Ikoyi Prison, Lagos since his arrest on 9 March 1995. Amnesty International believes that he and others among those arrested are prisoners of conscience, detained for the non-violent expression of their political views.

Amnesty International is also concerned that, as in 1986 and 1990, armed forces' officers may be sentenced to death on the basis of suspicion and inadequate evidence, following secret and grossly unfair trials by special military tribunals, and may be hastily executed without right of appeal to a higher or independent jurisdiction.

Following protests from foreign governments, on 23 March 1995 General (Retd) Olusegun Obasanjo was transferred from detention to restriction under house arrest at his farm in Ota, near Lagos, where he is denied all visits, including from his lawyer. Christine Anyanwu, editor of *The Sunday Magazine* who was detained on 15 March and Bayo Onanuga were released on 23 March. They had reported the mass arrests before the authorities acknowledged that any arrests had taken place. However, no other detainees are known to have been released and arrests have apparently continued.

In late March 1995 some 19 senior officers were reportedly brought before a military panel headed by Major-General Musa Magana Bamaiyi, Chairman of the National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA), for secret, late-night "trials".

On 27 March the Ministry of Defence said that detainees were being interrogated not tried, and that journalists might be allowed to observe the opening and closing of the trial when it did begin.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the continued detention, without charge or trial, of

soldiers and civilians accused of involvement in an alleged coup plot, in particular of 78-year-old Chief Meredith Adisa Akinloye, reportedly held incommunicado and without access to required medication for high blood pressure;

- stating Amnesty International's belief that he and others among those arrested are prisoners of conscience, detained for the non-violent expression of their political views;
- calling on the Nigerian authorities to make public the identities of those arrested in connection with the alleged coup plot and to ensure that all detainees have immediate access to lawyers, families and independent and appropriate medical treatment;
- expressing concern that, as in 1986 and 1990, armed forces' officers may be sentenced to death on the basis of suspicion and inadequate evidence, following secret and grossly unfair trials by special military tribunals, and may be hastily executed without right of appeal to a higher and independent jurisdiction;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience and for the release of all other detainees if they are not to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal offenses and fairly tried before an open and properly-constituted court with full rights of defence and appeal.

APPEALS TO:

General Sani Abacha
 Chairman, Provisional Ruling Council
 State House
 Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Telegrams: General Abacha, Abuja, Nigeria
Faxes: +234 95 232138

Lieutenant-General D. Oladipo Diya
 Vice-Chairman, Provisional Ruling
 Council and Chief of General Staff
 State House
 Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Telegrams: Lieutenant-General Diya, Abuja, Nigeria

Alhaji Aminu Saleh
 Secretary to the Government of the Federation of Nigeria
 State House
 Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria
Telegrams: Alhaji Saleh, Abuja, Nigeria

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Chief Tom Ikimi
 Minister of Foreign Affairs
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Maputo Street
 PMB 130, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

The Editor, *Theweek*, PO Box 11333, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
 The Editor, *Newswatch*, PMB 21499, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
 The Editor, *The Sunday Magazine*, PMB 21687, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
 The Editor, *Tempo*, PMB 21531, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
 The Editor, *Daily Sketch*, PMB 5067, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria
 The Editor, *New Democrat*, POB 4457, Kaduna South, Kaduna State, Nigeria

and to diplomatic representatives of NIGERIA accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 May 1995.