

UA 35/97 Fear of torture or ill-treatment /  
Possible prisoners of conscience

31 January 1997

**NIGERIA**Gbenga Adebuseyi, mid-40s, farm manager  
Bankole Akinrinade, 43, businessman in shipping  
Femi Akinrinade, 47, businessman  
Philip Arogheo, 30, driver  
Peter Ogunyamoju, 26, printer

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Fears for the safety of five detainees have been heightened by reports that one of them has been tortured in custody. The five men appear to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely because they are relatives or friends, or relatives of friends, of retired Lieutenant-General Alani Akinrinade. General Akinrinade is a leading member of the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) in exile who has been publicly accused by the Nigerian authorities of responsibility for bombings in Nigeria in 1996.

General Akinrinade's farm manager, Gbenga Adebuseyi, was arrested in December 1996. He is reported to have been hung up by his feet and to have had his head kicked while in detention at the Directorate of Military Intelligence headquarters in Apapa, Lagos.

General Akinrinade's driver, Philip Arogheo, was apparently arrested in mid-January 1997. One of his brothers, Femi Akinrinade, was arrested on 13 January. His sister-in-law, Bola Akinrinade, a 32-year-old civil servant, was also arrested on 13 January, and held effectively as a hostage for six days in place of her husband, Bankole Akinrinade, also a brother of General Akinrinade. During her detention, Bola Akinrinade was held incommunicado and without charge or trial at the headquarters of the Federal Intelligence and Investigations Bureau, the criminal investigation police, in Ikoyi, Lagos. Her family was unable to establish her whereabouts or send in food for her. She was released after Bankole Akinrinade was arrested on 18 January.

Peter Ogunyamoju was reportedly arrested in mid-January 1997 at the home of his cousin, Dr Amos Akingba, a business colleague and friend of General Akinrinade. He appears to have been detained, also effectively as a hostage, because the security police were unable to find Dr Akingba.

No charges have been brought against those detained, who are probably held under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984, which allows the indefinite, incommunicado detention without charge or trial of any person deemed to have threatened the security of the state. There is no legal recourse against such detention; this military decree specifically excludes the jurisdiction of the courts. Following criticism by a UN Secretary-General's mission in 1996, the government promised that security detentions would be subject to review. However, the review is not conducted by an independent, judicial body. The review panel set up in October 1996 is headed by security officials and conducts its reviews in secret, providing no safeguards for detainees against torture or arbitrary detention.

The authorities have made unsubstantiated accusations that NADECO was responsible for bomb attacks in northern Nigeria in January 1996 and a car-bomb on 14 November 1996 at Lagos international airport. Two weeks after the car-bomb, the police said that one of the three victims, the chief airport security officer, had been a NADECO agent who had blown himself up by accident -- accusations denied by both NADECO and the officer's family -- and that another

of the victims was carrying a cheque to deliver to General Akinrinade. General Akinrinade is the highest-ranking former military officer to have supported NADECO, which believes that the accusations against him are politically-motivated. In early May 1996 his home in Lagos was fire-bombed by unidentified attackers, and on 23 May 1996 his friend and business partner, retired Rear Admiral Olu Victor Omotenhinwa, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen. This was one of a number of killings in 1996 of Nigerians with connections to the pro-democracy movement which are feared to have been instigated by government agents, acting with or without the knowledge of the central authorities.

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

- expressing concern at the detention, incommunicado and without charge or trial, of the five people named above, and asking to know the reason for their continued detention;
- expressing particular concern at reports that Gbenga Adebusuyi has been tortured in detention;
- urging that he and the other detainees be immediately safeguarded against further torture or ill-treatment and given access to their lawyers, families and doctors of their own choice;
- calling for them to be released if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences and promptly and fairly tried.

**APPEALS TO:**

Dr Auwalu Hamisu Yadudu  
 Special adviser to the Head of State on judicial matters  
 State House, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: Dr Yadudu, State House, Abuja, Nigeria**  
**Salutation: Dear Dr Yadudu**

Major-General Abdulsalam A. Abubakar  
 Chief of Defence Staff  
 Provisional Ruling Council, State House  
 Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: Chief of Defence Staff, Abuja, Nigeria**  
**Salutation: Dear Major-General**

Colonel Ibrahim Sabo  
 Director, Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI)  
 Park Lane, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: Colonel Sabo, Director, DMI, Lagos, Nigeria**  
**Salutation: Dear Colonel**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr Justice P.K. Nwokedi, Chairman  
 National Human Rights Commission  
 c/o Ministry of Justice, Marina, Lagos, Nigeria

The Editor, *The News*, PMB 21531, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *Sunday Concord*, POB 4483, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *Newswatch*, PMB 21499, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *This Day*, PO Box 54749, Ikoyi, Lagos, 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 22 March 1997.