

UA 61/98      Health concern / prisoners of conscience /  
Prison conditions      26 February 1998

NIGERIA      **Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa, lawyer, prisoner of conscience since**  
**November 1997**  
**Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Chairman of the Campaign for Democracy, a**  
**pro-democracy organization, and prisoner of conscience since**  
1995  
**Shehu Sani, agricultural engineer, Vice-Chairman of the**  
**Campaign for Democracy, prisoner of conscience since 1995**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the health of the above-named prisoners of conscience who are reported to be seriously ill. **Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa** is reported to have been chained in an underground cell at the detention facility in Apapa, Lagos, of the Directorate of Military Intelligence (DMI) and to have contracted typhoid fever and scabies. **Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti** and **Shehu Sani** are reported to have required emergency hospital treatment recently after becoming seriously ill in prisons far from their homes.

Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa, a lawyer in the Chambers of veteran human rights defender Chief Gani Fawehinmi, has been in detention, incommunicado and without charge or trial, since his arrest by armed soldiers on 4 November 1997. He was arrested, together with his 75-year-old father, Chief Augustus Adegboruwa, at their home in Lagos. On 4 December, the military authorities said they had detained Chief Adegboruwa on suspicion of "gun-running" but he was subsequently released without charge. Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa, they stated, would remain in detention until he withdrew an allegation that the military had manhandled him at the time of his arrest. Under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984, the military government has the power to detain any person indefinitely, incommunicado and without charge or trial, who is deemed to have threatened the security of the state. The courts are specifically excluded from making any ruling in connection with any such detention.

In January 1998 there were reports that **Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti** had been transferred to the Ahmadu Bello Teaching Hospital in Zaria after becoming ill in Katsina prison, northern Nigeria, with an acute peptic ulcer and heart problems. In February **Shehu Sani** was reportedly admitted to Abia State University Teaching Hospital after becoming seriously ill with typhoid fever and hepatitis in Aba central prison, Abia State, southeastern Nigeria.

Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti and Shehu Sani are among 30 prisoners who are still imprisoned following secret and grossly unfair treason trials in 1995. They were sentenced to life imprisonment, later reduced to 15 years' imprisonment, for making public the lack of evidence against main defendants accused of plotting a coup in March 1995. The trials were aimed at silencing prominent critics of continued military rule such as retired Major-General Shehu Musa Yar'Adua, a former deputy head of state, who died in prison in December 1997 (see UA 387/97, AFR 44/27/97, 9 December 1997 and follow-up AFR 44/28/97, 19 December 1997). Another prisoner convicted in the 1995 trials, Staff Sergeant Patrick Usikekpo, also died in prison in December 1997, apparently in a typhoid epidemic. The government has made no statement about their deaths and their bodies were buried without the required autopsies or investigations into the causes of death.

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

- expressing concern at reports that harsh conditions and medical neglect have resulted in prisoner of conscience Ebun-Olu Adegboruwa suffering serious and life-threatening illnesses;
- expressing concern also that Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti and Shehu Sani are reported to have required emergency hospital treatment after becoming seriously ill with life-threatening illnesses in prison;
- appealing for them to be safeguarded from harsh prison conditions which amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, to be held in conditions which conform to international standards such as the United Nations' Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, and to be given prompt and appropriate medical treatment;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release on the grounds that they are prisoners of conscience, imprisoned for the non-violent expression of their political views.

**APPEALS TO:**

General Sani Abacha  
Chairman, Provisional Ruling Council  
State House, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

**Telegrams: General Abacha, Abuja, Nigeria**

**Faxes: (c/o Ministry of Foreign Affairs) + 234 9 523 0394 / 523 0210 ask for it to "please be forwarded"**

**Salutation: Dear 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**

Alhaji Bashir Dalhatu  
Minister of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs  
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

**Telegrams: Alhaji Dalhatu, State House, Abuja, Nigeria**

**Salutation: Dear Alhaji**

**COPIES TO:**

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

**Faxes: + 234 9 523 0394 / 523 0210**

Mr Justice P.K. Nwokedi, Chairman  
National Human Rights Commission, National Assembly Complex, Maitama  
PMB 444, Garki, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

The Editor, *The Punch*, PMB 21204, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Daily Sunray*, 220 Aba Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Today*, PO Box 10281, Kaduna, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Daily Star*, 9 Works Road, PMB 1139, Enugu, Enugu 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 9 April 1998.