

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 176/92 (AFR 44/07/92, 28 May 1992) - Incommunicado detention of prisoners of conscience/health concern

**NIGERIA:**

**Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti**, 51, doctor, Chairman of the newly-formed Campaign for Democracy, President of the Committee for the Defence of Human Rights  
**Femi Falana**, lawyer, member of the Campaign for Democracy, President of the National Association of Democratic Lawyers  
**Dr Baba Omojola**, economist, member of the Campaign for Democracy

and new names:

**Chief Gani Fawehinmi**, 54, human rights lawyer, member of the Campaign for Democracy  
**Olusegun Mayegun**, President, National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS)

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The five detainees named above have been charged with conspiracy to commit treasonable felony, an offence punishable by up to life imprisonment. They are alleged to have "conspired in order to force and compel the government...to change...the transition to civil rule programme". The Minister of Justice earlier alleged that they had plotted subversion and exacerbated recent civil unrest. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned for the non-violent expression of their political views, and is calling for their immediate and unconditional release.

**Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti**, **Femi Falana** and **Dr Baba Omojola** were arrested in Lagos on 19 May 1992. They were taken 700 kilometres to the new capital in central Nigeria, Abuja, where they have been held incommunicado. Their families and lawyers have been denied information about their whereabouts and access to them. The State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree, No. 2 of 1984, allows the Vice-President to order the indefinite administrative detention of any person he considers to be a threat to the security of the state or to the national economy. The courts are specifically precluded from investigating any detention under the decree. Although, as awaiting trial prisoners, they should be given full access to lawyers and family, the authorities are reportedly still holding them incommunicado on the grounds that they are still detained under Decree 2. On these grounds, detainees in the past have also been denied release on bail to await trial.

Well-known human rights lawyer **Chief Gani Fawehinmi** and lawyers representing the Civil Liberties Organisation, a Nigerian human rights group, filed legal actions in an attempt to enforce the detainees' constitutional rights and to have them produced in person before the High Court by the authorities. Chief Gani Fawehinmi was himself detained on 29 May 1992 in Lagos and similar legal action was taken to challenge his detention. However, the government ignored several orders by the Lagos High Court to produce the detainees in court as well as an order in Femi Falana's case that he should be released because his

detention was "illegal, unconstitutional, null and void".

On 9 June computers and files were stolen from the Campaign for Democracy headquarters.

**Olusegun Mayegun** was arrested in the early hours of the morning on 11 June at the University of Lagos campus. On 15 June lawyers in Lagos started to boycott the courts in protest but the Minister of Justice brought a legal injunction to halt such action.

On 15 June the five detainees were brought before a Magistrate's Court in Gwagwalada, about 30 kilometres from Abuja, and charged. When they appeared in court, both Dr Ransome-Kuti and Chief Gani Fawehinmi seemed unwell. Chief Gani Fawehinmi, while detained incommunicado and without charge or trial for four months in 1989, required

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urgent hospital treatment after being held in harsh conditions and denied daily medication for hypertension and a heart complaint.

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

- expressing concern at the charges of treasonable felony brought against Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana, Dr Baba Omojola, Chief Gani Fawehinmi and Olusegun Mayegun;

- explaining that Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned for the non-violent expression of their political views, and calling for their immediate and unconditional release;

- expressing concern at reports that, when they appeared in court on 15 June 1992, Dr Ransome-Kuti and Chief Gani Fawehinmi seemed unwell;

- appealing for assurances that the prisoners are being treated humanely and for them to be given full access to families and lawyers, to be held in conditions which conform to international standards and to receive all appropriate medical treatment.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) General Ibrahim Babangida  
President, Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces  
State House, Abuja  
Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

**Salutation: Dear Mr President**

**Telegrams: President Babangida, Lagos, Nigeria**

**Telexes: 21444 or 21236 EXTNAL NG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

2) Admiral (Retd) Augustus Aikhomu  
Vice-President  
State House  
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

**Salutation: Dear Admiral Aikhomu**

**Telegrams: Vice-President Aikhomu, Lagos, Nigeria**

**Telexes: 21444 or 21236 EXTNAL NG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)**

3) Mr Clement Akpangbo  
Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**Telegrams: Minister of Justice Akpangbo, Lagos, Nigeria**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Major-General (Retd) Ike O.S. Nwachukwu  
Minister of External Affairs

Ministry of External Affairs  
Maputo Street  
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory

Nigeria

and to any of the following newspapers:

Daily Times, PMB 21340, Ikeja, Lagos,  
Nigeria

The Punch, PMB 21204, Ikeja, Lagos,  
Nigeria

The Guardian, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos,  
Nigeria

Vanguard, PMB 1007, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria

Newswatch, PMB 21499, Ikeja, Lagos,  
Nigeria

and to: Campaign for Democracy, PO Box 7247, Lagos, Nigeria

and to diplomatic representatives of NIGERIA in your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 30 July 1992.