

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

**AI Index: AFR 44/08/93
Distr: UA/SC**

26 July 1993

Further information on UA 225/93 (AFR 44/06/93, 9 July 1993) - Legal Concern

NIGERIA: Beko Ransome-Kuti, 52, doctor, Chairman of the 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 (NADL)

Chief Gani Fawehinmi, 55, human rights lawyer, member of the Campaign for Democracy

and: Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP)

Amnesty International remains concerned about the detention of three human rights activists - Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana and Chief Gani Fawehinmi - who were charged on 13 July 1993 before a magistrate's court in the federal capital, Abuja, with sedition and conspiracy under the Penal Code (Northern Region). The charges carry a maximum penalty of seven years' imprisonment. On 15 July they again appeared before the magistrate's court; they were refused bail and were remanded in prison until 30 September. They are believed to have been initially held under the State Security (Detention of Persons) Decree No. 2 of 1984, which permits administrative detention for renewable periods of six weeks, thereby providing for indefinite detention without charge or trial of anyone suspected of threatening national security.

According to reports, they have been denied all visits from families and lawyers since 16 July. Reports also suggest that they may need medical attention which they are not receiving.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the detention of Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu, a prominent member of the Social Democratic Party (SDP), who was arrested on 20 July in Ibadan, Oyo State, in southwest Nigeria. He was subsequently transferred to Abuja. He was arrested after he called for a boycott of new presidential elections ordered by President Ibrahim Babangida for 14 August. He is not known to have been charged with any offence.

Amnesty International considers Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana, Chief Gani Fawehinmi and Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu to be prisoners of conscience who have been detained because of their peaceful political views and activities.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana and Chief Gani Fawehinmi were arrested after the Campaign for Democracy called for a week of protest against the government's decision on 23 June not to announce the results of the presidential election which took place on 12 June, claiming that there had been malpractices during the election. International observers, however, judged that the election had largely been fair. Two candidates, representing parties established by the military government of President Babangida, contested the election. Although the results were not officially announced, it was clear that Chief Moshood Abiola of the Social Democratic Party (SDP) had been successful. In addition to cancelling the results of the presidential election, the government repealed legislation allowing for the transition to civilian rule. President Babangida maintained, however, that he would

still hand over power to a civilian government on 29 August. A new election has been scheduled for 14 August but the SDP has refused to take part. Attempts by Chief Moshood Abiola and also SDP elected state governors to get the courts to overturn General Babangida's annulment of the results of the 12 June election were thwarted by a decree issued by the government on 19 July which prevents the courts from considering any case relating to the presidential election.

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FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters either in English or in your own language:

- repeating your concern about the detention of Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana and Chief Gani Fawehinmi, and also expressing concern about the arrest of Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu on 20 July;
- stating that Amnesty International believes that Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana, Chief Gani Fawehinmi and Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu are prisoners of conscience, detained for their peaceful political views and activities, and urging their immediate and unconditional release;
- expressing concern about reports that Dr Beko Ransome-Kuti, Femi Falana and Chief Gani Fawehinmi have been held in incommunicado detention since 16 July, and urging that they and Alhaji Lamidi Adedibu be allowed regular visits from lawyers, family members and medical professionals.

APPEALS TO:

1) General Ibrahim Babangida
President and Chairman of the National
Defence and Security Council
State House
Abuja
Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

Telegrams: President Babangida, Abuja, Nigeria

Telexes: [0905] 91529 or 91530 EXTNAL NG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear President

2) Mr Clement Akpamgbo
Attorney General of the Federation,
Minister of Justice and member of the
National Defence and Security Council
Ministry of Justice
Abuja
Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

Telegrams: Attorney General Akpamgbo, Abuja, Nigeria

Telex: [0905] 91529 or 91530 EXTNAL NG (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Chief Matthew Mbu
Minister of Foreign Affairs and member of
the National Defence and Security Council
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Maputo Street

Abuja
Federal Capital Territory
Nigeria

Daily Times, PMB 21340, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
National Concord, POB 4483, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
The Guardian, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria
Newswatch, PMB 21499, Ikeja, 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 6 September 1993.