

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 354/91 (AFR 44/13/91, 25 October 1991) and follow-up AFR 44/14/91 (31 October 1991)- Death penalty/legal concern

NIGERIA: Paul Iguele

Sunday Tomoloju
Trooper Olajide Adelaku
Trooper Chris Aniebi
Lance Corporal Pullen Blacky
Private Okam Enana
Lance Corporal Lucky Iwiero
Warrant Officer Jomo James
Warrant Officer David Mukoro
Sergeant Gatir Ortoo
Trooper Fakolade Taiwo

Amnesty International has received information that eight of the 11 people named above, who were sentenced to death after their third trial before a government controlled military tribunal, have had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment. The life sentences imposed on the other three defendants have been reduced to 10 years' imprisonment.

The 11 men named above, who include two civilians, were arrested in connection with the April 1990 coup attempt. They were reportedly tried three times in secret by a Special Military Tribunal, on charges of treason, a capital offence, or concealment of treason, punishable by life imprisonment. Details of their convictions are not known, nor is it clear when the first and second trials took place but they apparently resulted in acquittals. As with similar trials of alleged coup plotters in 1990, it appears that the government ordered their retrial in an attempt to ensure convictions. As in 1990 Amnesty International once again expresses its concern that the reason for the retrials was political, that the trials were grossly unfair and that the defendants were not allowed the opportunity to appeal against their convictions and sentences.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- welcoming the news that the eight people who were sentenced to death after 11 defendants were tried for the third time by a Special Military Tribunal, have had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment;
- expressing concern at reports that the Nigerian government apparently put the defendants through three secret trials before the Special Military Tribunal and calling on the government to release those prisoners who were previously acquitted;
- urging the authorities to allow those who were not previously acquitted to appeal against the decisions of the Special Military Tribunal to a higher,

independent court.

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APPEALS TO:

1. General Ibrahim Babangida
President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces
State House
Ribadu Road
Ikoyi Island, Lagos
Nigeria

Mr. President

Telegrams: President Babangida, Lagos, Nigeria
Telexes: 21444 EXTNAL NG
or 21236 EXTNAL NG
(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

2. Admiral (Retd) Augustus Aikhomu
Vice-President
State House
Ribadu Road
Ikoyi Island
Lagos, Nigeria

Mr. Vice-President

Telegrams: Vice-President Aikhomu, Lagos, Nigeria
Telexes: 21444 EXTNAL NG
or 21236 EXTNAL NG
(via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

3. General Sani Abacha
Chief of Defence Staff and Minister of Defence
Defence Headquarters
Ministry of Defence
Independence Building
Tafawa Balewa Square
Lagos, Nigeria

Dear General

Telegrams: Defence Minister Abacha, Lagos, Nigeria

4. Prince Bola Ajibola
Attorney-General of the Federation and Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
The Old Secretariat
PMB 12517, Marina
Lagos, Nigeria

Dear Minister

Telegrams: Justice Minister Ajibola, Lagos, Nigeria

COPIES TO:

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

Ministry of External Affairs
Maputo Street
Abuja
Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria

The Guardian, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria
The Punch, PMB 21204, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria
Nigerian Observer, PMB 1334, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria
Nigerian Tide, PMB 5072, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria
Nigerian Star, PMB 73, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria

President, Nigerian Bar Association, PMB 12610, 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 16 December 1991.