

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 44/16/95

UA 209/95

Legal concern / Fear of ill-treatment  
Possible Prisoners of conscience

25 August 1995

**NIGERIA** Batom Mitee, brother of Ledum Mitee, deputy president of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) Lekue Lah-Loolo, Assistant Secretary General of MOSOP  
Meshack Karanwi, university lecturer, recently returned to Nigeria  
Mr A. Kweku, employee of Saros International Ltd (publishing company owned by Ken Saro-Wiwa, President of MOSOP)

and possibly other Ogoni activists

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Amnesty International is concerned at reports that four supporters of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), arrested on 4 August 1995, remain detained without charge. The organization fears that they may be facing ill-treatment and harsh conditions in detention, and believes they may be prisoners of conscience.

The four, named above, are believed to be held at a military camp in Afam, about 30 kilometres east of Port Harcourt, after initially being held at the headquarters of the Mobile Police, a paramilitary force, in Port Harcourt.

Their arrests came six days after the security forces, on 29 July, reportedly broke into the office of MOSOP and Ken Saro-Wiwa's publishing business in Port Harcourt, destroying and seizing documentation and sealing the office to prevent its further use. A security guard is reported to have been injured during the operation. According to the Military State Administrator, the men have been arrested in connection with the May 1994 murder of four Ogoni leaders. However, unofficial sources suggest that they were arrested for making contact with MOSOP leaders currently on trial on murder charges in Port Harcourt.

Some women supporters of MOSOP were also reported to have been arrested, apparently for communicating human rights concerns to foreign human rights investigators. On 18 August 1995 security forces removed from Ken Saro-Wiwa's cell his personal possessions, documents and radio.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ken Saro-Wiwa and Ledum Mitee, already under attack by the authorities because of MOSOP's political campaign against environmental damage by the oil companies and for increased autonomy for the Ogoni ethnic group, are currently on trial charged with the murder of four rival Ogoni leaders in May 1994. Their prosecution appears to have been politically-motivated and their trial before a Civil Disturbances Special Tribunal is unfair because the tribunal, set up by the government specially to try their case, is neither independent nor impartial. Their defence lawyers have withdrawn from the trial in protest at its failure to meet Nigeria's own standards for fair trial (see UA 200/94, AFR 44/03/94, 24 May 1994 and follow-up AFR 44/07/94, 27 June 1994).

At least 20 uncharged Ogoni detainees remain in Port Harcourt prison held without charge or trial since mid-1994. Many Ogoni detainees were reported to have been severely beaten and ill-treated in incommunicado detention.

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

- expressing concern at the reported detention without trial of the detainees named above ;
- seeking information about the reasons for their arrest and that of other MOSOP supporters and the legal basis for their continued detention without charge;
- urging that, while in detention, they be treated in accordance with international standards for conditions of detention and that they be given full access to their lawyers, doctors and families;
- stating that Amnesty International believes the four are probably prisoners of conscience, detained for the non-violent expression of their political views;
- calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they are not to be promptly charged with recognizably criminal charges and brought to trial in accordance with international standards of fairness.

**APPEALS TO:**

General Sani Abacha  
 Chairman, Provisional Ruling Council  
 State House  
 Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: General Abacha, Abuja, Nigeria**  
**Faxes: +234 9 523 2138**  
**Telexes: (0905) 91529 or 91530 EXTNAL NG**  
**Salutation: Dear General**

Lieutenant-Colonel Dauda Musa Komo  
 State Military Administrator  
 Government House  
 91000 Port Harcourt  
 Rivers State, Nigeria  
**Telegrams : Administrator Komo, Government House, Rivers State, Nigeria**  
**Salutation : Dear Administrator**

**COPIES TO:**

Major Obi Umahi  
 Commander, Internal Security Task Force  
 Bori Military Camp  
 Rivers State  
 Nigeria

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

The Editor, *The News*, PMB 21531, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *Tell*, PMB 21749, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *Vanguard*, PMB 1007, Apapa, Lagos, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *Nigerian Tide*, PMB 5072, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *Point*, 222 Aba Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria  
 The Editor, *Sunray*, 220 Aba Road, Port Harcourt, Rivers 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 14 October 1995.