

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 44/22/97

20 November 1997

Further information on UA 347/97 (AFR 44/21/97, 5 November 1997) - Fear of ill-treatment / Legal concern

**NIGERIA** Mohammed Adamu, bureau chief in Abuja for *African Concord* news magazine  
Soji Omotunde, editor, *African Concord*  
new names: Adetokunbo Fakeye, defence correspondent, *PM News* newspaper  
Jenkins Alumona, editor, *The News* magazine  
Onome Osifo-Whiskey, managing editor, *Tell Magazine*  
Nduka Obaigbena, editor-in-chief, *This Day* newspaper  
Babafemi Ojudu, managing editor, *The News* newspaper group

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More journalists are reported to have been detained without charge or trial in a recent wave of arrests.

On 4 November 1997 **Adetokunbo Fakeye**, defence correspondent of *PM News*, a daily evening newspaper, was reportedly arrested and detained at Defence Headquarters in Lagos. On 8 November **Jenkins Alumona**, editor of *The News* magazine, was arrested at the Lagos studios of the state-owned television where he had just taken part in a program on sport. On 9 November **Onome Osifo-Whiskey**, managing editor of *Tell Magazine*, was arrested by armed security officers in Lagos as he drove to church with his children. On 14 November **Nduka Obaigbena**, editor-in-chief of *This Day*, was arrested in the new capital, Abuja, possibly in connection with a report about senior government officials close to the head of state. On 17 November **Babafemi Ojudu**, managing editor of *The News* newspaper group, was arrested on his return from a seminar in Kenya; he had earlier escaped arrest on 8 November.

*Tell* news magazine and *The News* newspaper group have been forced to operate in increasingly clandestine conditions under the present military government, but have remained critical of the annulment of the results of the 1993 presidential election and the government's current transition to civil rule program. In August 1993 Onome Osifo-Whiskey was among four senior *Tell* editors detained incommunicado and without charge for 12 days for publishing articles critical of the government. Babafemi Ojudu was detained in July 1995, when he was reportedly beaten, held in an airless cell, and deprived of medical care and regular food before being released without charge after 10 days. Kunle Ajibade, editor of *The News*, and George Mbah, assistant editor of *Tell*, are serving 15 years' imprisonment in harsh conditions after being convicted of treason in grossly unfair trials by a secret military tribunal in 1995. Nosa Igiebor, editor-in-chief of *Tell*, was detained incommunicado and without charge or trial for six months from December 1995.

In September 1997, following reports in *The News* and *Tell* that the head of state, General Sani Abacha, was seriously ill, armed soldiers and police sought the magazines' editors. They briefly detained and threatened Nosa Igiebor's wife, journalists, administrative staff and vendors, and seized copies of the magazine to prevent distribution first in Abuja, and more recently in Lagos.

In the days before his arrest Onome Osifo-Whiskey had publicized a hit-list of 22 *Tell* staff which had been sent anonymously to the magazine's offices.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of more journalists (naming some or all);

- asking why they were arrested and continue to be held in detention without charge or trial;
- expressing concern that they may be subjected to ill-treatment in detention, and urging that they be given immediate access to their families, lawyers and doctors of their own choice;
- expressing concern that they may be prisoners of conscience and calling for their immediate and unconditional release if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences and promptly and fairly tried.

**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**  
**Salutation: Dear General**

Dr Auwalu Hamisu Yadudu  
Special adviser to the Head of State on legal matters  
State House, Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: Dr Yadudu, State House, Abuja, Nigeria**  
**Salutation: Dear Dr Yadudu**

Major-General Abdulsalam A. Abubakar  
Chief of Defence Staff  
Provisional Ruling Council, State House  
Abuja, Federal Capital Territory, Nigeria  
**Telegrams: Chief of Defence Staff, Abuja, Nigeria**  
**Salutation: Dear Major-General**

**COPIES TO:**

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

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

The Editor, *Daily Sketch*, PMB 5067, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria  
The Editor, *The Democrat*, POB 4457, Kaduna South, Kaduna State, Nigeria  
The Editor, *This Day*, PO Box 54749, Ikoyi, Lagos, Nigeria  
The Editor, *The Guardian*, PMB 1217, Oshodi, Lagos, Nigeria  
The Editor, *PM News*, PMB 21531, Ikeja, Lagos, Nigeria  
The Editor, *Tell*, PMB 21749, Ijeka, 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 5 January 1998.