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NIGERIA: AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CONDEMNS CONFIRMATION OF DEATH SENTENCES ON KEN SARO-WIWA AND EIGHT OTHERS

Amnesty International today denounced the confirmation of death sentences on Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogoni minority activists in Nigeria, condemning the action as "blatant defiance of urgent international appeals to commute the death sentences.

As international criticism of Nigeria's human rights record heightens, the organization is calling on world leaders to step up their pressure on General Sani Abacha to immediately commute the death sentences, which were passed after grossly unfair trials.

"Today's move is a direct challenge to respect for human rights and to the international community, coming at the time when the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting opens in New Zealand. The challenge must be met," Amnesty International said.

The death sentences were unanimously confirmed by the Nigerian Provisional Ruling Council.
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