

**EXTERNAL (for general distribution)**

**AI Index: AFR 51/06/94  
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**14 November 1994**

**Further information on 335/94 (AFR 51/04/94, 9 September 1994) - Death Penalty**

**SIERRA LEONE Amara CONTEH  
and 11 others**

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Twelve soldiers have been executed by firing squad, nine during the night of 11 and 12 November 1994 and a further three later during the day of 12 November.

Among those executed was 77-year-old Amara Conteh, a lance-corporal who was sentenced to death on 7 September 1994 after being convicted of collaborating with rebel forces which have been fighting government troops since 1991. The other soldiers executed, whose identities are not yet known, had been convicted of one or several of the following charges: collaborating with rebels, armed robbery, robbery with violence or murder.

All had been tried by a court martial, although details of the trials and convictions are not known. They do not appear to have had any right to appeal against conviction and sentence. The former Attorney-General and Secretary of State for Justice, Franklyn Kargbo, resigned in September 1994 in protest against the use of the death penalty.

The latest executions have been described as a crack-down on indiscipline in the army. According to reports, 25 soldiers have been sentenced to death by courts martial since the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) came to power following a military coup in April 1992. A further six soldiers are on trial before a court martial on charges of murder. Amnesty International believes that further executions of soldiers convicted and sentenced to death by courts martial may take place.

These are the first executions to take place in Sierra Leone since December 1992 when 26 people - nine civilians and 17 military and police officers - were executed hastily, apparently after a trial by a special military court which was established by the NPRC to try treason cases.

By the end of 1993 government troops had regained most of the areas in the south and east of the country previously held by rebel forces of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) which invaded from neighbouring Liberia in 1991. However, the security situation in Sierra Leone has seriously deteriorated during 1994; hundreds of civilians have been killed in attacks on towns and villages and on Sierra Leone's major roads, including in areas previously unaffected by fighting in the centre and north of the country. Although responsibility for these attacks has been officially attributed to rebel forces of the RUF, the continued presence of the RUF in Sierra Leone is widely disputed. Attacks appear to have been carried out by disaffected or deserted soldiers to loot property and illegally exploit minerals,

particularly diamonds. Witnesses have reported that those carrying out the attacks wear full army uniforms.

**FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters, preferably in English:**

- expressing grave concern about the execution of 12 soldiers, including Amara Conteh, on 11 and 12 November 1994;
- explaining that Amnesty International opposes the death penalty in all cases on the grounds that it is a violation of the right to life and the right not to be subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment;
- urging that no further executions take place and that all other death sentences be commuted.

**APPEALS TO:**

Captain Valentine E.M. Strasser  
Chairman, Supreme Council of State  
National Provisional Ruling Council  
State House

Independence Avenue

Freetown, Sierra Leone

**Telegrams: Captain Strasser, NPRC, Freetown, Sierra Leone**

**Telexes: 3230**

**Salutation: Dear Captain Strasser**

Captain Julius Maada Bio  
Deputy Chairman and  
Chief Secretary of State  
National Provisional Ruling Council  
State House

Independence Avenue

Freetown, Sierra Leone

**Telegrams: Captain Maada Bio, NPRC, Freetown, Sierra Leone**

**Telexes: 3230**

**Salutation: Dear Captain Maada Bio**

Mr Claude V. Campbell  
Attorney General and Secretary of State for Justice  
Department of Justice and Office of the Attorney General  
Guma Building

Lamina Sankoh Street

Freetown, Sierra Leone

**Telegrams: Attorney General Campbell, Justice Department,**

**Freetown, Sierra Leone**

**Salutation: Dear Mr Campbell**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

Captain Sahr Tom Nyuma  
Under-Secretary of State for Defence  
Department of Defence  
Tower Hill

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Colonel Kellie Conteh

Chief of Staff

Republic of Sierra Leone Military Force (RSLMF)  
New Office  
Wilkinson Road  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

and to the editors of the following newspapers:

The New Citizen, 5 Hannah Benka-Coker Street, Brookfields,  
Freetown, Sierra Leone

Daily Mail, 29-31 Rawdon Street, PO Box 53, Freetown, Sierra  
Leone

and to diplomatic representatives of Sierra Leone accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat,  
or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 December 1994.