

PUBLIC

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To: Health professionals
From: Medical Office / Africa Program
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**Further information on
MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION
Seven prisoners
Togo**

(Update AI Index AFR 57/03/00)

Key words: lack of medical care / torture / ill-treatment / death in detention

Summary

Amnesty International has received information that Messan Kokou Paul (known as Hebiesso) died in May 2000 in Kara prison, Togo, allegedly because of lack of medical care and harsh prison conditions. He is the second prisoner - of an original group of nine men who had been forcibly returned from Ghana to Togo - who has died. Ntsukpui Attisso died in April 1998 while in detention. Amnesty International is renewing appeals for this group of men to receive medical care and guarantees of security.

Background information

At the end of 1997 nine Togolese men in Ghana - Amegninou (known as Samba Santos), Doni Koffi Mawuli Kové, Kliko Kokou Yovodévi (known as Gildas Eglo), Lawson Akouete Latévi (known as Kalakouta), Messan Kokou Paul (known as Hebiesso), Ntsukpui Attisso, Nyabledji John, Seke Koudjo (known as Django) and Sosouvi Kovi Hounvé - were handed over to the Togolese authorities by Ghana. They had been accused of minor crimes in Ghana. Several of these nine prisoners are members of the *Comité Togolais pour la Résistance* (CTR), the Togolese Resistance Committee, an opposition party in exile. They were first held in the civil prison and at the *Direction de la Police Judiciaire* (DPJ) in Lomé. In July 1998 they were transferred to Kara prison in the north of Togo.

Amnesty International continues to be concerned at the worsening health of these seven prisoners held in Kara prison and the lack of medical care available to them. The prisoners are held in harsh conditions amounting to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment. They are not being provided with sufficient food and sanitary conditions are very poor. They can only wash themselves twice a week. They sleep on the floor and have not been provided with blankets. In addition, since their arrest in Togo they have been beaten repeatedly and are at risk of further torture.

The prisoners are reportedly suffering from malaria as well as skin diseases. Amnesty International has sought clarification of their medical condition but the Togolese authorities have released no information on their health. Kara prison authorities have not provided them with the medication they need. Their wives travel from Ghana or southern Togo to Kara prison with medication when they can afford it. The prisoners are only allowed to see members of their family in order to receive food or medicine and cannot leave their cells at any other time.

Recommended actions

Please write polite letters, preferably in French, in your professional capacity to the addresses below:

- expressing concern at reports of the death in Kara prison of Messan Kokou Paul (known as Hebiesso) in May 2000 and the death of Ntsukpui Attisso in April 1998;
- urging the authorities to carry out an independent investigation into the circumstances surrounding their deaths and to make the findings of the investigation public;
- seeking information about the diagnosis and current health of the other seven Togolese extradited from Ghana to Togo, Amegninou (known as Samba Santos), Doni Koffi Mawuli Kové, Kliko Kokou Yovodévi (known as Gildas Eglo), Lawson Akouete Latévi (known as Kalakouta), Nyabledji John, Seke Koudjo (known as Django) and Sosouvi Kovi Hounvé, currently held in Kara prison;
- urging that the prisoners are provided with adequate medical care according to their needs as provided for by international human rights standards such as the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners [Article 22];
- expressing concern that the prisoners are held in harsh conditions in Kara prison amounting to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment;
- expressing concern about the prisoners being ill-treated and tortured while in detention;
- urging that those responsible for ill-treatment and torture are brought to justice and that the seven prisoners' physical security be guaranteed;
- seeking information about the medical services available in Kara prison;
- asking whether before being extradited the nine prisoners, including the two who died, were tried in Ghana or Togo, on what charges and with what outcome.

If you receive no reply from the government or other recipients within two months of dispatch of your letter, please send a follow up letter seeking a response. Please check with the medical team if you are sending appeals after 15 August, and send copies of any replies you do receive to the International Secretariat (att: medical team).

Addresses

Please send your appeals to the following addresses:

Son Excellence
Monsieur le Général Gnassingbé Eyadéma
Président de la République
Palais Présidentiel
Avenue de la Marina
Lomé, Togo

You can write directly at the following website:
<http://www.republicoftogo.com/english/ecrir-pdt.html>

Général Séyi Méméne
Garde des Sceaux, Ministre de la Justice
Ministère de la Justice
Avenue de la Marina
Rue Colonel de Roux
Lomé, Togo

Public Prosecutor
Monsieur Dabré Gbandjagba
Procureur Général
BP 342
Lomé, Togo
Civil Prison of Kara
Kara
Préfecture de Kozah
Togo

Copies

Please send copies of your letters to the following addresses:

Crocodile
BP 60087 Lomé
Togo

Ligue Togolaise des Droits de l'Homme (LTDH)
BP 2302 Lomé
Togo

Association Togolaise pour la Défense et la Promotion des Droits Humains (ATDPDH)
Angle Rue Adjallé et F. Mitterand
BP 7165 Lomé
Togo

and to diplomatic representatives of Togo accredited to your country.