

---

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL NEWS SERVICE 92/93

---

TO: PRESS OFFICERS  
FROM: IS PRESS OFFICE  
DATE: 6 AUGUST 1993

AI INDEX: NWS 11/92/93  
DISTR: SC/PO  
NO OF WORDS: 940

NEWS SERVICE ITEMS: External - Sierra Leone, United Kingdom

## NEWS INITIATIVES - INTERNAL

### INTERNATIONAL NEWS RELEASES

Saudi Arabia - 14 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

Sudan - 29 September - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

### TARGETED AND LIMITED NEWS RELEASES

Laos - 9 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 87 & 88

Georgia - 10 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 83 Due to press office oversight (sorry!) this was sent out in News Service 90 without an embargo. PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS ITEM IS EMBARGOED FOR 10 AUGUST.

Sierra Leone - 12 August - INCLUDED IN THIS NEWS SERVICE. SEE ALSO NEWS SERVICE 90

Angola - 20 August - SEE NEWS SERVICE 90

North Korea - 1 October - SEE NEWS SERVICE 88

### FORTHCOMING NEWS INITIATIVES

Myanmar - 7 October (International).

EJEs and "Disappearances" - 20 October (International)

Venezuela - 10 November (International, linked to EJEs & Disappearances)

AI INDEX: AFR 51/WU 03/93 EXTERNAL  
EMBARGOED FOR 0001 HRS GMT THURSDAY 12 AUGUST 1993

SIERRA LEONE: CHILDREN DETAINED IN REBEL WAR

Children are being detained by soldiers and imprisoned - sometimes indefinitely - in Sierra Leone, Amnesty International said today.

While visiting the country earlier this year, the human rights organization saw two groups of children detained in the context of the ongoing rebel war in Sierra Leone. Some, including a baby, were being detained with their mothers in military barracks for questioning - although they have probably since been released, it is known that children are routinely detained by soldiers as part of government counter-insurgency operations.

Not all children are held and released quickly, however. Amnesty International delegates saw another group of children, including one boy as young as 14, who are being held as long-term political detainees in Pademba Road Prison in the capital Freetown.

In May this year there were 16 boys under 18 in Pademba Road Prison - all of them held without charge or trial, virtually in secret, cut off from their families who may not even know they are behind bars. Conditions in the prison are very poor, with serious overcrowding, inadequate medical care and malnutrition.

Most of the boys had been arrested for questioning by soldiers, rounded up indiscriminately for "screening" to check if they had given help to rebels. Fourteen-year-old Alhaji Kallon is typical: he and his parents were detained by soldiers in August 1992, as they returned home from the bush after fighting between government and rebel forces ended. He has now been imprisoned for a year and has no idea what has happened to his parents.

"It is quite unacceptable that children's human rights should be violated in this way," said Amnesty International. "In many of these cases the only reason for their imprisonment in the first place seems to have been a general suspicion that boys have fought with the rebels. No proper investigation has ever taken place, and all questions stopped once they were put in prison.

"Only last week we made another appeal for urgent action by our membership worldwide because of the grim conditions in Pademba Road Prison. It is bad enough that adults are being detained in these circumstances - and we are still calling for a review of the cases of over 100 adult prisoners held at the same prison - but governments have a particular responsibility to protect the rights of children and the government of Sierra Leone is instead violating those rights.

"Although the government recently released 86 political prisoners, we don't know that any of the 16 children held there were set free."

Children have also been victims of the rebel war in many other ways. Rebels have killed and mutilated children, and both rebels and government armed forces have enlisted boys as young as seven to fight - although in June this year the government announced the immediate demobilisation of all soldiers aged under 15. Many children have been orphaned, thousands more displaced.

Amnesty International is now calling on the government to take steps to prevent the detention of children in military barracks and to review the cases of all political detainees at Pademba Road Prison, especially the children, in order to establish grounds for their detention and release any who had not been involved in violent activities.

ENDS\

AI INDEX: EUR 45/WU 03/93 EXTERNAL  
6 AUGUST 1993

**UNITED KINGDOM: AI CALLS FOR FULLY INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO ALLEGATIONS OF ILL-TREATMENT DURING DEPORTATION PROCEDURES**

Amnesty International has written to the government of the United Kingdom, expressing concern about recent allegations of ill-treatment of people being detained for deportation. The human rights organization has urged the government to set up a fully independent and impartial investigation into these allegations.

Amnesty International is investigating the case of Joy Gardner, a West Indian woman who died in custody on 1 August 1993, after she was reportedly ill-treated by police officers, and the alleged ill-treatment of Dorothy Nwokedi, a Nigerian woman, during deportation procedures in July 1993.

"It is essential that an investigation is begun into both these cases as soon as possible," said Amnesty International. "But an internal inquiry is not good enough - the investigation must be fully independent, the results must be made public and anyone found to have violated human rights must be brought to justice. Otherwise, minimum international human rights standards will not have been met."

These two cases come shortly after an Amnesty International worldwide campaign against racist ill-treatment by police in Western Europe, which started in February 1993. The organization called on governments in the UK and elsewhere in Europe to make it clear to law enforcement bodies that racist behaviour will not be tolerated. Specifically, Amnesty International called for pre-employment screening of police officers to ensure racial and cultural sensitivity, for compulsory training in cultural awareness and for training or even dismissal for police officers who display racist tendencies.

ENDS\