

ACTION



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA

URGENT ACTION PROGRAM OFFICE • P.O. Box 1270 • Nederland, CO 80466-1270 • 303-440-0913 • FAX: 303-258-7881

UA 350/88 Torture/Incommunicado Detention 21 December 1988
Benin: Leon Yelome, former law student, aged 30
 Moussa Mama Yari, former student of economics, aged 37

Leon Yelome was arrested on 14 October and was taken to Camp Guezo, a military camp in Cotonou where political detainees have often been held and subjected to ill-treatment and torture. Moussa Mama Yari was arrested on 24 October and was first held in a police station (commissariat de la gendarmerie) in Seme. However his current place of detention is not yet known. Both men had been sought by the police for some time, and in February 1988 Leon Yelome's father, Antoine Yelome, was arrested and is believed to have been tortured in order to make him reveal the whereabouts of Leon Yelome. Antoine Yelome is still being held without charge or trial.

Leon Yelome and Moussa Mama Yari were evidently arrested on account of their suspected links with left-wing opponents of the government and appear to be imprisoned on account of their non-violent political views, and most recently, their criticisms of the long-term detention of other opponents or critics of the government. There are currently at least 100 prisoners of conscience held without charge or trial in Benin, many of whom have been held since 1985.

Since their arrest more than one month ago, both men are believed to have been held incommunicado and are not known to have been referred to the procuracy or formally remanded in custody by a magistrat (judicial official), as is required by law. In January 1988, a leading opponent of the Benin government, Remy Glele Akpokpo, who had been arrested after the detention of members of his family, died in detention as a result of torture. No inquiry is known to have been held to establish the causes of or responsibility for his death.

Both Leon Yelome and Moussa Mama Yari were among many students held as prisoners of conscience for nearly five years without charge or trial from 1979 until a presidential amnesty in 1984. However, by late 1984 some former prisoners of conscience were already being re-arrested and this pattern is still continuing. Despite government statements throughout 1988 that many prisoners adopted by Amnesty International as prisoners of conscience are to be brought to trial, no legal proceedings have yet started and no criminal charges are believed to have been brought against any of these prisoners.

In addition to more than 100 people detained without trial on account of their non-violent opposition to the government, perhaps as many as 100 others remain held without charge after conspiracies against the government were apparently discovered in March and June 1988.

Benin has not signed the United Nations' (UN) International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, but in 1986 ratified the organisation of African Unity's (OAU) African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights.

Recommended Action: telegrams/telexes/airmail letters, in French if possible, otherwise English is fine:

This Urgent Action appeal originated from Amnesty International's research headquarters at the International Secretariat in London, United Kingdom. Amnesty International is an independent worldwide movement working for the international protection of human rights. It seeks the release of men and women detained anywhere because of their beliefs, color, sex, ethnic origin, language or religious creed, provided they have not used nor advocated violence. These are termed prisoners of conscience. It works for fair and prompt trials for all political prisoners and works on behalf of such people detained without charge or trial. It opposes the death penalty and torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment of all prisoners without reservation.

- expressing concern at the arrest of Leon Yelome and Moussa Mama Yari for the peaceful expression of their political views and explaining that Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience:
- requesting assurances that all steps are being taken to ensure that they are not subjected to torture, in accordance with Article 5 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 5 of the OAU's African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights:
- urging that the two detainees be allowed prompt and regular access to relatives and legal counsel:
- appealing to the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally.

Appeals to:

[Your Excellency]
 Monsieur Mohamed Amadou Cisse
 Ministre d'Etat Delege
 a la Presidence
 La Presidence
 Cotonou
 Republique Populaire du Benin
 (Telegrams: Minister of State,
 Cotonou, Benin)
 (telex: 979522; answerback, PRESIREP)

[Suggested Salutations]

[Your Excellency]
 Monsieur Edouard Zodehougan
 Ministre de l'Interieur
 Ministere de l'Interieur
 Cotonou
 Republique Populaire du Benin
 (Telegrams: Interior Minister,
 Cotonou, Benin)

Copies to:

Son Excellence
 Monsieur Mathieu Kerekou
 President de la Republique
 La Presidence
 Cotonou
 Republique Populaire du Benin

Monsieur Guy Landry Hazoume
 Ministre des Affaires Etrangeres
 et de la Cooperation
 Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres
 Cotonou
 Republique Populaire du Benin

Africa
 10 Rue A.K. Bourgi
 BP 1826, Dakar
 Senegal

Ehuzu
 BP 1210
 Cotonou
 Republique Populaire du Benin

(newspapers)

Ambassador Theophile Nata
 Embassy of the People's Republic of Benin
 2737 Cathedral Ave NW
 Washington DC 20008

Please send appeals immediately. Please check with the Colorado office WEEKDAYS ONLY between 9:00 AM and 6:00 PM Mountain Time if sending appeals after February 1, 1989.

- ☐ Please take action as soon as you receive this Urgent Action appeal. Carefully read the recommended action and send a telegram or airmail letter immediately to one or more of the addresses given. Other letters can be sent afterwards.
- ☐ In Urgent Action cases, A.I. has to act rapidly to prevent the ill-treatment of prisoners. An appeal is issued when A.I. believes it has received reliable and accurate information in such cases. It is not always possible to verify all details independently and in some instances the situation outlined in the appeal may change. Urgent Action participants are always notified of any significant new information.
- ☐ Information about the alleged connection of any person with an organization which is banned in their country is provided as information only and should not be included in appeals.
- ☐ Correct salutations include: Dear Sir - for local authorities, prison commanders, police chiefs; Your Honor - for judges; Dear

- ☐ Admiral, General, Captain, etc. - for military officers; Your Excellency - for most minister-level officials and state presidents; in closing you can use "Yours sincerely" or "Respectfully" for any authority.
- ☐ Send your appeals in English unless you are fluent with the language.
- ☐ Copies of any replies from government authorities should be sent immediately to the Colorado office. If appropriate, than the official who has replied and ask to be kept informed about the case.
- ☐ Postage Costs: airmail letters cost 45 cents a page (1/2 oz.) to most countries; aerogrammes are 39 cents each; airmail postcards cost 36 cents to most countries; full-rate telegrams cost approximately 31 cents a word including address; text and signature, depending on the telegram company used. Mail with colorful stamps may not reach its destination.

Councillor David Sullivan

#10

January 9, 1989

whereas:

Once again this City Council has learned
of another case of two individuals <sup>heone yelome and
moussa mama yari</sup> while in Benin, Africa
were arrested ⁱⁿ ~~on~~ October ~~1~~, 1988 and immediately
taken to Camp Guezo, a military camp in
Cotonou where political detainees have often been
held and subjected to ill-treatment and torture, and
whereas:

Bash Heone yelome and Moussa mama yari
were evidently arrested on account of their suspected
links with left wing opponents of the government, and
appear to be imprisoned ^{because} ~~on~~ of their non-violent
political views and most recently, their criticisms

of the long-term detention of other opponents or critics of the government; currently at least 100 prisoners of conscience held without charge or trial in Benin, many of whom have been held since 1985, and

Whereas:

these individuals were among many students held as prisoners of conscience for nearly 5 years without charge or trial from 1979 until a presidential amnesty in 1984
 nonetheless be it

Resolved:

That this City Council go on record

requesting the immediate release of Leon
 Yelome and Moussa Mama Yari as well
 as the speedy release of all political
 prisoners held by the Benin government
 and be it further

Resolved:

that the City Clerk be and hereby
 is requested to forward ^{a suitably engrossed copy} of this resolution to
 Your Excellency Monsieur Mohamed Amadou Assa
 Ministre d'Etat Delege a la Presidence
 La Presidence Cotone, Republique Populaire
 du Benin



City of Cambridge

COUNCILLOR DAVID SULLIVAN

10.

IN CITY COUNCIL

January 9, 1989

- WHEREAS:** Once again this City Council has learned of another case of two individuals, Leone Yelome and Moussa Mama Yari, while in Benin, Africa were arrested in October, 1988 and immediately taken to Camp Guezo, a military camp in Cotonou, where political detainees have often been held and subjected to ill-treatment and torture; and
- WHEREAS:** Both Leone Yelome and Moussa Mama Yari were evidently arrested on account of their suspected links with left-wing opponents of the government and appear to be imprisoned because of their non-violent political views and, most recently, their criticism of the long-term detention of other opponents or critics of the government; currently at least 100 prisoners of conscience held without charge or trial in Benin, many of whom have been held since 1985; and
- WHEREAS:** These individuals were among many students held as prisoners of conscience for nearly 5 years without charge or trial from 1979 until a Presidential amnesty in 1984; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED:** That this City Council go on record urging the immediate release of Leone Yelome and Moussa Mama Yari, as well as the speedy release of all political prisoners by the Benin government; and be it further
- RESOLVED:** That the City Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward a suitably engrossed copy of this resolution to His Excellency, Monsieur Mohamed Amadou Cisse, Ministre d'Etat Delege a la Presidence, La Presidence Cotonou, Republique Populaire du Benin.

In City Council January 9, 1989.

Adopted by the affirmative vote of 9 members.

Attest:- Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A true copy;

ATTEST:-

Joseph E. Connarton, City Clerk.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Joseph E. Connarton".

Order #10

S-7

C.D. Sullivan re: resolutions urging the immediate release of Yeone Yelome & Moussa Mama Yari from Camp Guezo in Benin, Africa & the speedy release of all political prisoners by the Benin government.

In City Council,

January 9, 1989

1-9-89

Order Adopted