



Steungroep voor inheemse volken
Groupe d'appui pour les peuples indigènes
Support group for indigenous peoples
Grupo de apoyo para los pueblos indígenas

To His Excellency Amadou Ali
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
1000 Yaoundé
Cameroon
Fax: 237 223 00 05

Antwerpen, August 6, 2002.

Your Excellency,

We are writing you to express our deep concerns about the safety of members of the indigenous organization **Mbororo Social and Cultural Development Association (MBOSCUDA)**.

On April 29, 2002, **Mr. Ousman Haman** was arrested in Bamenda, in the North-west Province. He was released on bail by the Bamenda High Court on May 17, 2002. According to his lawyer, he was tortured by the gendarmes following his arrest. He was reportedly beaten on the soles of his feet hundred fifty (150) times using a cane and flogged while ordered to jump on sand by the gendarmes. He was also reportedly beaten by his inmates in the Bamenda Terre Brigade barracks, while the gendarmes reportedly refused to intervene. He was taken to hospital, then released on bail but re-arrested a few days later.

Mr. Ahmadou Hassan, Mr. Adamu Isa, and Mr. Yunusa Mbaghoji were arrested by the Gendarmerie on May 15, 2002, in Douala, Littoral region. They were transferred to Bamenda and detained without charge for more than a week. Together with Mr. Ousman Haman, the men were transferred to the Bafoussam Central Prison, in the West Province on May 23, 2002. They are being held without charge, in violation of the Cameroon law under which detainees should be referred to a judicial authority to be either charged or released without 72 hours of arrest.

In 1986 a prominent businessman and a member of the Central Committee of the ruling Cameroon People's Democratic Movement (CPDM), established two cattle ranches in the Boyo and Menchum divisions of the North West Province. He allegedly forced both Mbororo and farming communities from their lands without compensation. In 1992, MBOSCUDA was established to defend the interests of the Mbororo people and promote its development. The arrested men are members of MBOSCUDA. The businessman is said to use his close links with the authorities and the Gendarmerie in the dispute with the Mbororo cattle raisers. In 1993, three members of MBOSCUDA were arrested and unlawfully detained. In 1996, four members of MBOSCUDA were arrested and held without charge for several days.

Therefore, Your Excellency, we urge you:

- 1) to order the prompt release of Mr. Ousman Haman, Mr. Ahmadou Hassan, Mr. Adamu Isa and Mr. Yunusa Mbaghoji if they cannot be charged with a clearly recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial in accordance with international standards, including article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights ratified by Cameroon in 1984.
- 2) To guarantee their physical and mental safety during their detention.
- 3) To order a prompt, impartial and full investigation in accordance with international treaties into all allegations of torture made by Mr. Ousman Haman, in order to bring all those found responsible to justice as soon as possible.
- 4) To recognise the rights of the Mbororo cattle raisers as indigenous people in accordance with international standards for indigenous peoples such as ILO Convention 169.

Vergeeten volken
zoeken vrienden
met visie

Sincerely Yours,

For KWIA,

Johan Bosman
Policy Analyst.

cc.: Mr. Louis Michel, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belgium.
Mr. Per , Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark and Chairman of the EU Council of
Ministers.
Mr. Christopher Patten, EU Commissioner for External Relations.
Mr. , EC Desk Officer for Cameroon.
Mr. , EU representative in Cameroon.