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QUESTION AND ANSWER SERIES

NIGERIA: TREATMENT OF POLITICAL OPPONENTS, HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS AND JOURNALISTS

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GLOSSARY

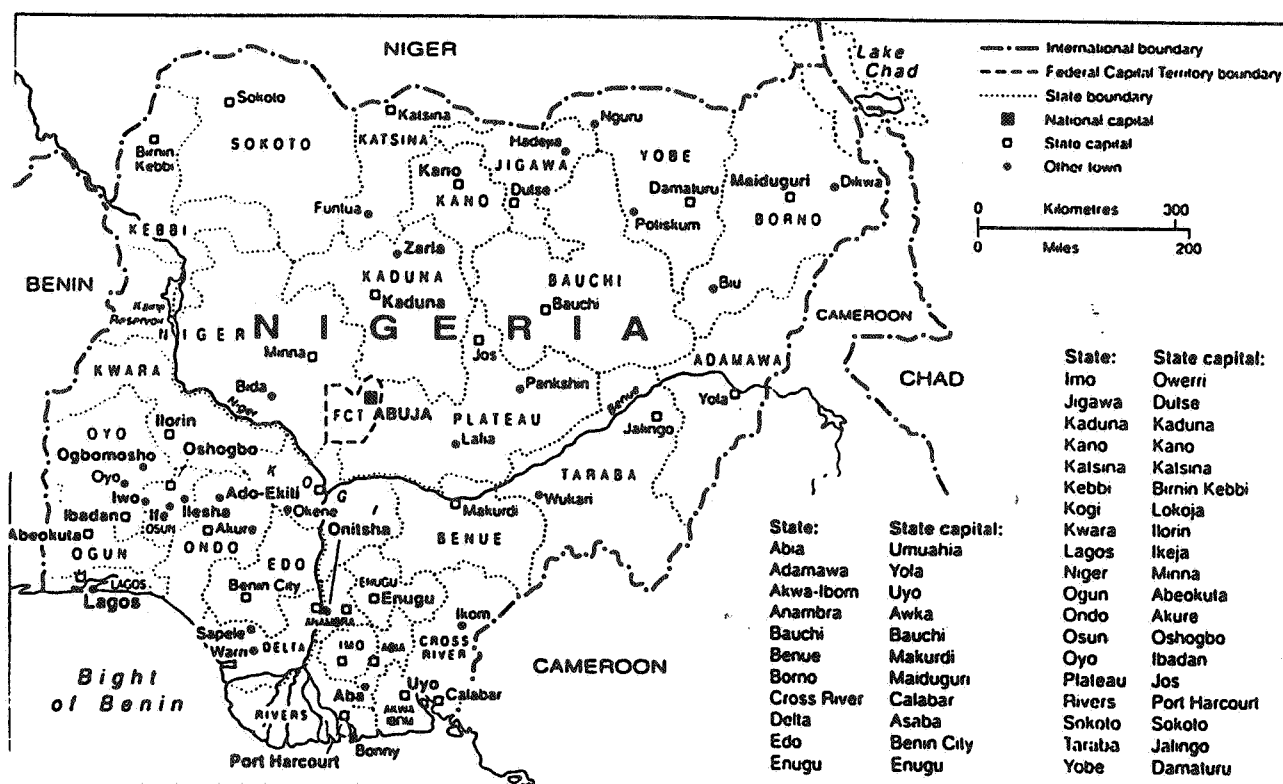
CD	Campaign for Democracy
CDHR	Committee for the Defense of Human Rights
CLO	Civil Liberties Organisation
CNC	Committee for National Consensus
CRP	Constitutional Rights Project
DA	Democratic Alternative
DPN	Democratic Party of Nigeria
FIIB	Federal Intelligence and Investigation Bureau
GDM	Grassroot Democratic Movement
MOSOP	Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People
NADECO	National Democratic Coalition
NCP	National Conscience Party
NCPN	National Centre Party of Nigeria
Nalicon	National Liberation Council of Nigeria
NECON	National Electoral Council
PRC	Provisional Ruling Council
RDI	Radio Democrat International
SSS	State Security Service
UAD	United Action for Democracy
UDFN	United Democratic Front of Nigeria
UNCP	United Nigerian Congress Party

MAP

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report, a follow-up to the Research Directorate's July 1996 Question and Answer series paper *Nigeria: Chronology of Events, February 1995 - March 1996*, examines the treatment of political opponents, human rights activists and journalists in Nigeria. The paper also presents an overview of political developments in Nigeria since March 1996 in order to provide a better understanding of the situation in which these groups find themselves.

2. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS SINCE MARCH 1996

Local elections took place in March 1996 but without the participation of political parties, which were banned at that time (*L'état du monde* 1997, 215; *Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 623). Fresh local elections were planned for late 1996 in order to take into account the redistribution of constituencies and allow duly registered political parties to participate (*L'état du monde* 1997, 215; *Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 623; *Jeune Afrique* 19-25 June 1996). In preparation for the transition,¹ the National Electoral Council (NECON) in June 1996 developed rules setting forth the conditions to be satisfied by political parties wishing to register for the elections. Of the 23 political groups that bought registration forms, between 15 and 18 managed to submit their applications within the prescribed period, which according to various sources was four to six weeks (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 625; *Country Reports 1996* 1997, 218; AFP 30 Sept. 1996). On 30 September 1996, NECON officially accorded five political parties the right to take part in the elections: the United Nigeria Congress Party (UNCP), the Committee for National Consensus (CNC), the National Centre Party of Nigeria (NCPN), the Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN) and the Grassroot Democratic Movement (GDM) (*Africa Confidential* 18 Oct. 1996; AFP 30 Sept. 1996; *Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 625-26). The

¹ General Abacha, who seized power in November 1993, promised to install a democratic regime and put in place a transitional program (*Country Reports 1996* 1997, 210; *Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 623, 625; Reuters 18 Mar. 1997). The political opposition is dissatisfied with the transitional program and its results (AFP 13 Mar. 1997; *L'état du monde* 1997, 217), believing it to be just a manoeuvre designed to keep General Abacha in power (Reuters 25 Oct. 1996; *Africa News* Apr. 1996; PANA 4 July 1997). For more information on the transition, see the Research Directorate's July 1996 paper *Nigeria: Chronology of Events, February 1995 - March 1996*.

parties were selected on the basis of a points system that, according to the chairman of NECON, took into account factors such as the extent of the membership and the administrative network of the parties, as well as their approach to various issues (*Africa Research Bulletin* 28 Nov. 1996, 12434). The parties not selected were ordered by NECON to disband (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 625; *Country Reports 1996* 1997, 218; AI 1997, 245). Opponents of the regime and observers denounced the party selection process as being rigged (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 625; HRW 1997, 41). The political groups that did not win official approval could not continue to operate legally (IPS 1 Oct. 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 28 Nov. 1996, 12434; *New African* Dec. 1996).

According to observers, none of the selected parties constitutes a real opposition to President Abacha's regime (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 625; AI 1997, 245; DPA 25 Feb. 1997; *Country Reports 1996* 1997, 218). This allegation has reportedly been denied by the parties involved (DPA 9 Jan. 1997). A number of sources report that the leaders of these five parties have close ties to the ruling military regime (*Africa Confidential* 18 Oct. 1996; *New African* Dec. 1996; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997). In addition, some of these parties have called on Abacha to run for president in the upcoming elections, claiming that he is a candidate who could bring about consensus (Reuters 18 Mar. 1997). Reuters notes that these are the same parties that obtained the greatest number of seats in the March 1997 elections (described later in this section) (*ibid.*). According to one source, United Nigerian Congress Party (UNCP) officials even launched a campaign calling on all parties to support Abacha in the next presidential elections (*The Economist* 22 Mar. 1997). All five parties would reportedly be pleased to see Abacha elected president in 1998 (*Le Monde* 10 July 1997; *Africa Fund* 26 Apr. 1997).

In October 1996, General Abacha announced that power would be handed over to a democratically-elected civilian government on 1 October 1998 (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 624; Reuters 25 Oct. 1996). The same month, General Abacha also announced the creation of six new states as a decentralizing measure, as well as the creation of 183 new municipalities (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 623; *New African* Dec. 1996). This announcement was part of the transition process (AFP 2 Oct. 1996; *Africa*

Confidential 18 Oct. 1996). As a result, there were now a total of 36 states (AFP 2 Oct. 1996; *New African* Dec. 1996; IPS 1 Oct. 1996). According to one source, this reorganization will in reality strengthen the central government, given the meagre financial resources of most of the states (*New African* Dec. 1996). *Le Monde* later reported that General Abacha had ordered the states to remain under military administration until the 1998 elections (10 July 1997).

The local elections planned for December 1996 were postponed until March 1997 (*Country Reports 1996 1997*, 220; DPA 9 Jan. 1997; AFP 14 Jan. 1997). One source notes that adherence to the transition timetable is very important to many Nigerians, since they have already experienced numerous disappointments and do not want to see the transitional program bogged down in years of delays (DPA 9 Jan. 1997). Other Nigerians do not know the various parties involved and consequently are little concerned by delays in the municipal election program (*ibid.*). Some observers even question the credibility of the political transition process (*Africa Confidential* 18 Oct. 1996; *Jeune Afrique* 19-25 June 1996; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997). *West Africa* emphasizes that despite the criticism, all sides of the political spectrum accept the timetable that has been drawn up (29 July-4 Aug. 1996).

Voter registration, a crucial phase of the transitional program, ended in mid-February 1997 (AFP 19 Feb. 1997; *Africa Research Bulletin* 24 Mar. 1997, 12570). According to observers, the compilation of voters' lists was marred by irregularities (*ibid.*; AFP 19 Feb. 1997), but the government has denied these allegations (*ibid.* 13 Mar. 1997; *Africa Research Bulletin* 24 Mar. 1997, 12570). The opposition, continuing to denounce the military regime, opted to boycott the March 1997 local elections (AFP 13 Mar. 1997; Reuters 18 Mar. 1997), the first multiparty elections since 1993 (DPA 9 Jan. 1997; AFP 16 Mar. 1997; Reuters 18 Mar. 1997). According to one source, American observers declared that the elections had been fair and free (*Africa Research Bulletin* 25 Apr. 1997, 12610). However, other sources report numerous irregularities (The Africa Fund 26 Apr. 1997; *Africa Analysis* 13 June 1997, 3; NADECO May 1997).

The UNCP was the big winner in the elections, even in those states which had favoured Moshood Abiola in the 1993 presidential elections (see Section 3.2). The Democratic Party of Nigeria (DPN) was second (Reuters 18 Mar. 1997; *The Economist*

22 Mar. 1997; *Africa Research Bulletin* 25 Apr. 1997, 12610). The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), an opposition party that had been ruled ineligible to take part, contested the validity of the local elections. According to NADECO, the parties that took part had no platform and were motivated only by a desire for power, with all of them supporting the military junta's program (*The Economist* 22 Mar. 1997; NADECO May 1997).

Democracy activists are afraid that the transition will be jeopardized if there are any more delays in the electoral schedule (Reuters 23 May 1997; AFP 2 July 1997). They doubt that General Abacha will really stand by his commitment to restore democracy (IPS 8 July 1997; Reuters 23 May 1997; *Swiss Review of World Affairs* 1 Oct. 1997). The five registered political parties on the other hand are pleased that the elections have been postponed (IPS 8 July 1997; Reuters 23 May 1997); in fact, they had even asked for such a postponement (AFP 2 July 1997; PANA 4 July 1997). Gubernatorial elections will take place on 1 August 1998 rather than in late 1997, as originally scheduled (IPS 8 July 1997; AFP 2 July 1997; APS 22 Sept. 1997). Legislative elections will be held in each state in December 1997, but those elected will not be sworn in until 21 September 1998 (IPS 8 July 1997; APS 22 Sept. 1997). Federal parliamentary elections are scheduled for 25 April 1998, and will be followed by presidential elections on 1 August 1998 (IPS 8 July 1997; AFP 2 July 1997).

Finally, according to one source, some prominent Nigerians are concerned about the possible impact on Nigeria if the military regime hangs on to power for a few more years either directly or indirectly through a puppet civilian government (*Manchester Guardian Weekly* 13 July 1997).

3. POLITICAL OPPOSITION

3.1 Structure of the Political Opposition

The various groups making up the political fabric of Nigeria are divided by one source into three categories. The first, consisting of former rulers (both civilian and military) of the country, tends to support the current regime; the second category, made up of "pragmatic"

elements, is more eager to have a civilian government installed but places its confidence in General Abacha's transitional program; the third category, including the regime's most fierce opponents, is particularly well represented in the southern areas of the country (*L'état du monde* 1997, 218). The regime's opponents operate within the country but are also supported abroad by a large number of politically active Nigerian refugees in Europe and the United States (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997; APIC 30 Nov. 1996).

The principal opposition group is the National Democratic Coalition (NADECO), created in 1994 by former politicians, retired army officers and human rights activists (*ibid.*; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997). As its name suggests, NADECO is a coalition of a large number of organizations fighting for the establishment of democratic rule (*ibid.*; PANA 4 July 1997). Among other things, NADECO calls for the transfer of power to a transitional government headed by Chief Abiola (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 626; *Africa Analysis* 5 Sept. 1997). Its first major protest, in 1994, failed due to police intervention (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997; AFP 20 May 1997). Since then, its activities, which take the form of conferences, meetings or the distribution of tracts, have often continued to be thwarted by security forces (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). Michael Adekunle Ajasin, a NADECO leader, died of a heart attack on 3 October 1997 (AFP 5 Oct. 1997; Xinhua 5 Oct. 1997). NADECO has two foreign missions—one in London and the other in Washington (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997).

The National Liberation Council of Nigeria (Nalicon) was founded in 1995 by writer and Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka, in exile since November 1994, and 16 other opposition figures (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 626; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997). This group, based abroad, is also working for the restoration of democracy (*ibid.*; Ithonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). In June 1996, Nalicon set up its own underground radio station outside Nigeria to beam shortwave broadcasts denouncing the Abacha regime into the country (AFP 30 July 1997; *Ottawa Citizen* 13 Mar. 1997; *New African* Oct. 96;). The station, originally called "Radio Democrat Nigeria International," has been renamed "Radio Kudirat" in honour of Chief Abiola's wife, assassinated in June 1996 (see Section 3.2) (RDI 27 Aug. 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 24 Oct. 1996, 12401).

In April 1996, Professor Soyinka announced the creation of the United Democratic Front of Nigeria (UDFN) by exiled opposition groups (AFP 1 Apr. 1996; *Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 626; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997). The UDFN favours a non-violent approach that would facilitate the restoration of democracy (AFP 1 Apr. 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 May 1996, 12232; Africa News Apr. 1996;). It seeks to reinforce the efforts of civil society of Nigeria (Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). Born out of a March 1996 democracy summit held in Norway, the UDFN consists of a number of organizations that have chosen to work together to restore democracy to Nigeria taking into account the mandate conferred by voters in the 1993 elections (UDFN 31 Mar. 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 May 1996, 12232; APIC 30 Nov. 1996). The UDFN's member organizations are the Action Group for Democracy (AGD), the African Democratic League (ADL), the Campaign for Democracy (CD), the Coalition for Democratic Awareness (CDA), the Democratic Alternative (DA), the National Alliance for Democracy (NAD), the National Democratic Alliance Committee (NDAC), NADECO, the National Freedom Foundation (NFF), Nalicon, the New Nigerian Forum (NNF), the Nigerian Democratic Movement (NDM), and the Nigerian Liberation Group (NLG) (UDFN 31 Mar. 1996).

Observers believe that the opposition does not have the capacity to mobilize the population of Nigeria (*L'état du monde* 1997, 217; AFP 20 May 1997). In addition, NADECO, though a national organization, is reportedly weakened by the fact that its leaders have either fled the country or are regularly imprisoned (ibid.; *New African* Apr. 1997).

Apart from the political opposition, there are other groups as well that are fighting for human rights and democracy; these groups include the CD, the Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR), the Civil Liberties Organisation (CLO), the Constitutional Rights Project (CRP), the National Association of Lawyers for the Defense of Human Rights (NALDHR) and Human Rights Africa (Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997). The structure of these organizations varies: some rely on highly visible leaders, others have contacts in universities, while still others have a committee-based structure (Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997).

The CD, formed in 1991, is a coalition of some 40 human rights, labour and social organizations whose objective is to restore civilian rule (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 626; AFP 20 May 1997; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1997, 12687, NADECO 2 Oct. 1997).

The Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP) wants the rights of the Ogoni ethnic group to be recognized and is pressuring the government for a fairer distribution of the petroleum revenues in southwestern Nigeria, where most of the Ogonis are concentrated (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 626; AFP 20 May 1997). MOSOP chief Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other Ogonis were hanged in November 1995 after being convicted of the murder of four Ogoni leaders who supported the military regime in what most observers felt was a deeply flawed trial² (*Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 626; AFP 20 May 1997; *Courrier international* 12-18 Dec. 1996; AI 6 Nov. 1996; *Country Reports 1995* 1996).

In May 1997, 22 human rights and pro-democracy organizations banded together under the banner of the new United Action for Democracy (UAD) in order to combine their efforts to establish a civilian regime chosen by the people (AFP 20 May 1997; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1997, 12687; *Post Express Wired* 20 May 1997). The CD, MOSOP and CLO belong to this coalition (AFP 20 May 1997; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1997, 12687; *Post Express Wired* 20 May 1997). According to the *Post Express*, the UAD also includes the CRP, the DA, the National Association of Nigerian Students (NANS), MOSOP, the Association of Democratic Citizens (ADC), Journalists for Democratic Rights (JODER), the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), Media Rights Agenda (MRS), the People's Labour Movement (PLM), Community Action for Popular Participation (CAPP), the Campaign for Independent Unionism (CIU), the Human Rights Monitor (HRM), the Kano Democratic

² In late 1996, 19 Ogonis charged at the same time as Saro-Wiwa were still in prison awaiting their trial; among them were General Olusegun Obasanjo and his lieutenant Shehu Musa Yar'Adua (*Libération* 11 Nov. 1996; *Political Handbook of the World: 1997* 1997, 626; *Country Reports 1996* 1997, 215). In December 1996, the Port Harcourt High Court refused to admit the evidence of torture and ill-treatment submitted by the prisoners and rejected their request to be freed (*Courrier international* 12-18 Dec. 1996; AI 1997, 246). According to a number of sources, the authorities continue to inflict abuses on the Ogonis (AI 19 Aug. 1997; *Country Reports 1996* 1997, 221; *Courrier international* 12-18 Dec. 1996).

League (KDL), the Abuja Coalition (AC), the Jos Democratic Movement (JOM), the Rivers Coalition, the Senior Staff Consultative Assembly of Nigeria (SESCAN), the Kaduna Alliance for Democracy (KAD), the United Workers' Action Group (UWAG), and the African Redemption Monitor (ARM) (ibid.). The coalition calls for among other things the immediate transfer of power to a national unity transitional government and the unconditional liberation of all political prisoners (ibid.; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1997, 12687). The UAD, which operates within Nigeria, works in close collaboration with the UDFN, which is based outside the country (Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997).

Political Handbook of the World: 1997 mentions a number of other active groups, including the Eastern Mandate Union, which has its origins in southeastern Nigeria, the Movement for National Reconciliation, the National Conscience Party (NCP), the National Unity Organization created by former head of state Olusegun Obasanjo in order to support Abiola in the 1993 elections, the Nigerian People's Movement (a group representing the Ibo ethnic group of eastern Nigeria), and the United Democratic Congress (1997, 626).

Finally, one source suggests that there is discord among the various exiled groups (*Africa Analysis* 8 Aug. 1997, 3), but this is denied by NADECO (2 Oct. 1997). *Africa Analysis* emphasizes that while all the groups ultimately want to oust General Abacha, some of them have adopted a more flexible position and no longer insist that the June 1993 election results be recognized (5 Sept. 1997, 3). NADECO, however, would risk a great deal if it made concessions on this point, since it would probably lose the considerable support it enjoys in its home territory, the Yoruba region of southwestern Nigeria (ibid.). Within Nigeria, those who favour more direct means of ousting the military regime support the UAD; it is thought that their efforts may have a better chance of success than the activities of NADECO outside Nigeria (ibid.). Other sources mention disagreements among opposition groups regarding the annulment of the 1993 elections (Reuters 21 May 1997; DPA 20 May 1997). Professor Ihonvbere emphasizes the fact that despite certain differences of opinion, Nalicon and NADECO do work together (14 Oct. 1997).

3.2 Treatment of Political Opponents

Sources report that the political opposition does not have any real right to freely express its views, and that its leaders continue to be intimidated or detained (*Manchester Guardian Weekly* 13 July 1997; HRW 1997, 42; *Libération* 11 Nov. 1996; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). Some of them, fearing for their lives, have preferred to leave the country (*New African* Apr. 1997; *Le Monde* 6 June 1996; *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 13 July 1997; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997). The major opposition leaders who have not chosen to leave are in prison (*Africa Confidential* 18 Oct. 1996; *Jeune Afrique* 19-25 June 1996; AFP 20 May 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). Others face death threats or feel they are being followed (*New African* Apr. 1997). NADECO points out that while other activists are involved in distributing tracts, making phone calls or even delivering letters for human rights organizations, it is advisable for them to stay underground for a while or risk disappearance (2 Oct. 1997). Finally, depending on their degree of involvement and participation in the activities of pro-democracy groups, activists may be threatened and otherwise intimidated by the authorities (*ibid.*; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). If a person is stopped by the authorities—for example at a road block or at commemorative day celebrations—and is found to be in possession of a pro-democracy organization membership card, the security forces do not hesitate to imprison that individual (Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997).

IPS has reported the diocesan of Owo, Monsignor Awelewa Adebisi, as saying that Nigerians are reluctant to freely express themselves for fear of being considered NADECO supporters (IPS 8 July 1997; see also *ibid.* 24 June 1996). The CDHR maintains that pro-democracy activists, above all NADECO members, are victims of "repression" carried out by the government (5 Sept. 1997; see also IPS 21 June 1996). The CDHR adds that intimidation is prevalent primarily in the major cities, particularly in southwestern Nigeria; in the villages, people are too frightened of the authorities to take part in activities promoting the restoration of democracy (17 Oct. 1997).

In 1996, the Nigerian government tightened its measures against the opposition (AFP 13 Dec. 1996; *L'état du monde* 1997, 217). In 1995 and 1996, it reportedly blamed NADECO

for various acts of violence (ibid.). In addition, the government reportedly arrested more opposition figures than it freed (*Manchester Guardian Weekly* 13 July 1997).

Amnesty International also reports on the treatment of those close to exiled pro-democracy organization leaders. Notably, according to Amnesty International, the authorities use arbitrary detention as a means of intimidation, as in the case of Sabina Solayide Iluyomade and her daughter Folake, detained on 19 February 1997 (30 Apr. 1997, 2). Another source reports that the wife and the daughter of Nosa Ogiebor, the managing editor of *Tell*, have also been arrested (AP 15 Sept. 1997). Other sources explain that by detaining the children of the regime's opponents, the government hopes to arrest the parents as well by enticing them to come to the rescue of their children (HRW 1997, 42; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 213).

Amnesty International describes the situation as follows: "The threat of arbitrary detention continues to hang over all human rights activists who speak out against the government or who criticize its manipulation of the current transition to civilian rule so as to exclude all genuine opposition groups" (30 Apr. 1997, 2). The government views opposition groups as dissidents (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997).

Decree 1, adopted in 1996, criminalizes criticism or misrepresentation of the transitional program (HRW 1997, 42; IFEX 5 Aug. 1997). Decree 2, implemented by previous military regimes, also remains in effect; it allows the government to detain without trial any person who endangers state security (*Country Reports 1996 1997*, 213; IPS 10 Sept. 1996; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). The authorities use these decrees to arrest opponents of the regime (ibid.; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997).

Moshood Abiola, who had apparently won the June 1993 presidential elections, was arrested and charged with treason in June 1994 for proclaiming himself the winner of the elections (Africa News Apr. 1996; *L'état du monde* 1997, 214; *Political Handbook of the World: 1997 1997*, 623). He is still in prison (IPS 1 Oct. 1997; *Manchester Guardian Weekly* 13 July 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). On 10 May 1996, the authorities questioned his wife,

Kudirat Abiola, whom they accused of conspiracy and making false statements³. Kudirat Abiola, a major opposition figure who has also defended her husband, was released on bail on 28 May 1996 (*International Herald Tribune* 10 May 1996; *Le Monde* 6 June 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1996, 12276). On 4 June 1996 she was murdered (HRW 1997, 41; *L'état du monde* 1997, 217; AI 1997, 247), the victim, according to some sources, of an extrajudicial killing (ibid.; HRW 1997, 41; *Keesing's* June 1996, 41128). On 5 June 1996 police broke up a peaceful demonstration by Nigerians who were marching through the streets of Ibadan protesting Kudirat Abiola's murder (Africa News June 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 22 July 1996, 12309). About a dozen people were arrested by police (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Africa News June 1996) and released shortly after (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997).

On 17 June 1996, the authorities took in four NADECO members for questioning in connection with Kudirat Abiola's murder (RDI 23 July 1996; Reuters 20 July 1996; AI 1997, 247) and kept them in detention despite a federal high court order to release them after finding there was insufficient evidence to lay charges (RDI 23 July 1996; *West Africa* 22-28 July 1997; Reuters 20 July 1996). One of these four NADECO members, Onosoya, was freed for health reasons 16 days after his arrest (ibid.; RDI 23 July 1996), while the three others—Adesanya, Daudu and Adebajo—remained in prison until mid-October 1996 (*Libération* 16 Oct. 1996; AI 17 Oct. 1996). By April 1997 the investigations dealing with Kudirat Abiola's murder had not yet yielded any results (AFP 27 Jan. 1997; *New African* Apr. 1997).

Former NADECO secretary-general Ayo Opadokun was released from prison on 25 July 1996 but rearrested the very next day (*Country Reports* 1996 1997, 214). He was held without charge until autumn 1996 (ibid.; DPA 4 Oct. 1996; AI 17 Oct. 1996; Africa News 4 Oct. 1996).

³ This was apparently related to the publication of documents in which she states that her husband, Moshood Abiola, is the legitimate president of Nigeria (*International Herald Tribune* 10 May 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1996, 12277).

In November 1996, Suliati Adedeji, a businesswoman and an NCPN executive known for speaking her mind, was beaten and killed in her home by a group of armed men (*Country Reports 1996 1997*, 212; AFP 15 Nov. 1996; Reuters 23 Nov. 1996).

In December 1996, the authorities of the municipality of Owo in Ondo state threatened NADECO and its national president, Michael Adekunle Ajasin.⁴ First, during an unannounced visit to Chief Ajasin's home, the military administrator, naval commander Anthony Onyerugbulem, warned him that meetings of opposition members would no longer be allowed in his home because such meetings constituted a threat to the government and the local population (AFP 13 Dec. 1996; DPA 13 Dec. 1996). Owo mayor Femi Idris reportedly stated later that the municipal authorities could not guarantee the security of NADECO members (AFP 13 Dec. 1996; DPA 13 Dec. 1996). Radio Nigeria-Lagos reported the incident differently, stating that Commander Onyerigbunam had gone to Chief Adekunle Ajasin's residence to tell him that the people of Owo were irritated by NADECO's antagonistic approach (19 Dec. 1996).

In January 1997, the opposition learned about a plot to kill Abraham Adesanya and Michael Adekunle Ajasin, the only two major NADECO leaders still in Nigeria (AFP 11 Jan. 1997; Xinhua 16 Jan. 1997; *New African* Apr. 1997). As early as June 1996, Adesanya had received a letter containing death threats (AFP 15 June 1996; *Africa News* 29 Jan. 1997). On 15 January 1997, assailants tried to kill Adesanya in Lagos (AFP 19 Jan. 1997; *New African* Apr. 1997; AI 30 Apr. 1997, 4). Sources report that investigations into the murders of opposition activists in late 1996 and early 1997 have stalled (AFP 27 Jan. 1997; *New African* Apr. 1997). The attempted murder of Adesanya is attributed by the authorities to infighting within NADECO (*ibid.*).

The government blames the opposition for a series of bombings in Lagos between 4 November 1996 and 7 January 1997; the bomb attacks were primarily directed against military targets and reportedly resulted in the death of the airport security chief and two soldiers (AFP 22 Jan. 1997b; PANA 8 May 1997; AI 1997, 246). An unknown group calling itself the National Liberation Organization (NLO) claimed responsibility for the

⁴ Ajasin has since died; see Section 3.1 for more information.

bombings, but the government accuses NADECO and Nalicon of being the real perpetrators⁵ (AI 14 Jan. 1997; *New African* Mar. 1997). According to some sources, no one ever did claim responsibility for the attacks (AFP 22 Sept. 1997; IPS 13 Mar. 1997). NADECO has denied any involvement whatsoever in the bombings (AFP 22 Jan. 1997b; Radio Kudirat Nigeria 29 Nov. 1996). In December 1996, Chiefs Olabiyi Durojaiye and Olu Falae, two NADECO leaders, were jailed along with interim CD president Dr. Frederick Fasheun and other democracy organization leaders (AI 1997, 246; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 214; AFP 22 Jan. 1997b). Altogether, 22 suspects in the bombings were arrested in December 1996 and January 1997 (Xinhua 22 Jan. 1997; AFP 11 Feb. 1997; Africa News 22 Jan. 1997). In March 1997, General Abacha's regime formally charged about 15 opposition activists, including Wole Soyinka, Olu Falae and Frederick Fasheun, with treason⁶ (IPS 13 Mar. 1997; AFP 13 Mar. 1997; PANA 8 May 1997). Eleven of those charged appeared in court on 12 March 1997, while the others, in exile, were charged in absentia with the same offences of having conspired to wage war against the country's military chief and having planted bombs to carry out their plan (AFP 13 Mar. 1997; IPS 13 Mar. 1997; Africa Fund 26 Apr. 1997). Observers believe that the charges were pure fabrications designed to keep the opposition activists in detention (IPS 13 Mar. 1997; HRW/Africa 13 Mar. 1997). The Ikeja court dismissed the treason charges, stating that they were outside its jurisdiction (Radio Kudirat Nigeria 13 May 1997; CDHR 5 Sept. 1997). In spite of that, according to NADECO, the accused are still being detained and the government does not seem likely to bring them to trial any time soon, preferring to keep these opposition activists behind bars (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997).

AFP reports that other explosions have killed two people and wounded 58 others; the police blame Nalicon and NADECO (30 July 1997). However, NADECO denies

⁵ The NLO communiqué claiming responsibility for the attacks was sent only to two Nigerian newspapers, and not to representatives of any of the international press agencies in Nigeria (AFP 10 Jan. 1997).

⁶ AFP reports that Nigerian authorities issued a search order for Soyinka and three other opposition figures (NADECO president Chief Enahoro, former minister and senior army officer General Akinrinad, and businessman and former senator Bola Tinubua) in late July 1997 in connection with treason and conspiracy charges (30 July 1997).

responsibility for the explosions (ibid.; *Africa Confidential* 12 Sept. 1997, 6). The attacks were reportedly all directed against military targets (AFP 30 July 1997).

4. TREATMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

Numerous organizations for the defence and promotion of human rights operate in Nigeria, but their work is regularly hampered by the actions of the Nigerian authorities, who do not hesitate to arrest the leaders and activists most critical of the regime (*Country Reports 1996* 1997, 220; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). The most prominent groups are the CLO, the CDHR, the CRP, the National Association of Democrat Lawyers (NADL), Human Rights Africa, and the Legal Research and Resource Development Center (*Country Reports 1996* 1997, 220; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). Like the regime's political opponents, leaders of human rights movements too were jailed in 1996 (*Jeune Afrique* 19-25 June 1996; AI 1997, 246). The situation has not changed in 1997 (CDHR 5 Sept. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). Several leaders of these organizations have been forced into hiding, while others have been arrested on trumped-up charges (ibid.; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). In addition, openly acknowledging one's membership in pro-democracy organizations is extremely dangerous in Nigeria, since the security forces do not hesitate to arrest members of these organizations, particularly if they have a membership card on them (ibid.; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). Private lawyers are hampered in their practice by so much harassment that clients no longer want to deal with them (Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). The CDHR emphasizes moreover that when the government finds out that an organization is about to publish a document on the human rights situation in the country, it dispatches security forces to the organization's offices to seize all copies of the document, which are then used as evidence to support charges of publishing seditious material (17 Oct. 1997).

According to the CDHR, the human rights activists most likely to be harassed by security forces are primarily those in the major towns (ibid.). Momodu, however, is of the opinion that the situation is the same everywhere in the country (22 Oct. 1997).

The United Nations sent a mission to Nigeria in March and April 1996 to investigate allegations that the trials of Ken Saro-Wiwa and other members of the Ogoni ethnic group had not been conducted fairly⁷ (AI 1997, 245; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 216; *West Africa* 22-28 Apr. 1996). In order to prevent Ogoniland human rights activists from communicating with the UN delegation, the Nigerian government reportedly held them in detention without charging them or bringing them to trial (AI 1997, 246; HRW 1997, 43; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 216; *La Lettre hebdomadaire de la FIDH* 11-18 Apr. 1996). When the UN mission released its report, the government reportedly freed a few prisoners (Reuters 23 July 1997).

Two lawyers representing Ogoni prisoners obtained the permission of the court to have their clients photographed in court,⁸ but were then arrested for hindering the policemen who tried to arrest the photographer (*Country Reports 1996 1997*, 215-216; AI 1997, 246). They were released by the end of 1996, but continued to suffer harassment at the hands of the authorities, who, for example, later rearrested them and detained them for a few days (*Country Reports 1996 1997*, 216; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). One lawyer, Fawehinmi, was freed at the same time as another lawyer and human rights activist, Femi Falana, as well as Francis Aborishade, an ardent democrat and NCP leader (AI 1997, 247; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 213; DPA 20 Nov. 1996). In June 1995, Fawehinmi, Falana and the other lawyers representing Ken Saro-Wiwa and the Ogonis had boycotted the trial to protest against irregularities (AI 1997, 247).

On 23 June 1996, after spending almost a year in prison without being charged or brought to trial, some human rights activists were released; they included CLO executive director Abdul Oroh and Human Rights Africa (HRA) chairman Olatunji Abayomi (ibid.; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 214; AFP 24 June 1996; *Africa Research Bulletin* 22 July 1996, 12310). Abayomi was rearrested in August 1997, just before his organization was to confer a human rights award on the chief justice of Benin's constitutional court; he

⁷ For more information on this, see the DIRB's July 1996 paper *Nigeria: Chronology of Events, February 1995 - March 1996*, particularly the entries for 22 May 1995 and 31 October 1995.

⁸ These prisoners were part of the group of 19 Ogonis arrested in 1994 in connection with the same events that led to nine other Ogonis, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, being hanged (HRW 1997 1997, 43; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 215).

was released six days later (*Africa Confidential* 12 Sept. 1997, 6; AFP 2 Sept. 1997).

On 25 September 1997, in Jos, northern Nigeria, he was taken in for questioning again, along with some 70 other people gathered to listen to a lecture on democracy (AFP 25 Sept. 1997; AP 26 Sept. 1997; NADECO 2 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). The CDHR notes that 65 people, mostly students, were released the same day (*ibid.*). Abayomi and four other HRA officials were released on bail on 6 October 1997 (*ibid.*; AFP 7 Oct. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). All five are charged with illegal assembly; they are scheduled to appear in court on 8 December 1997 (AFP 7 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997).

In November 1996, Patrice Vahard, Eke Ubije and David Omounzuafo, three Amnesty International representatives, were arrested and held for a day for "possession of seditious materials"; they had to report to the authorities for the next few days (AFP 9 Nov. 1996; *Country Reports 1996* 1997, 221; AI 1997, 248).

As mentioned earlier, the well-known human rights activist Dr. Fasheun was arrested in December 1996 on suspicion of involvement in a series of bomb explosions that had occurred in Lagos a short time before (AFP 30 Jan. 1997; AI 30 Apr. 1997). The federal high court ordered Dr. Fasheun released in January 1997 (AFP 22 Jan. 1997a), but the government appealed, maintaining its position that Dr. Fasheun had been involved in the bomb attacks (AFP 30 Jan. 1997; Reuters 31 Jan. 1997a).

Taking advantage of a decree against illegal meetings, the police prevent human rights organizations from holding meetings, seminars and lectures (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). For example, AFP, citing two local newspapers, reports that on 2 March 1997, police in the northern Nigerian town of Kaduna abruptly halted a lecture on human rights organized by the Network for Justice; tear gas was used to disperse the crowd (2 Mar. 1997). Many human rights activists have been unable to participate in United Nations meetings because the government has confiscated their passports; this was the case with CLO president Ayo Obe, Afronet president Olisa Agbakoba, and CLO lawyer Joseph Otteh, in March 1996 (*La Lettre hebdomadaire de la FIDH* 11-18 Apr. 1996; HRW 1997, 43). Sources indicate that similar incidents have occurred in 1997 as well (Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997).

In September 1997, police prevented pro-democracy organizations from holding a farewell reception for American ambassador Walter Carrington and forced guests who had already arrived to leave (DPA 19 Sept. 1997; AFP 19 Sept. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997).

5. JOURNALISTS

Sources report that it is very common for journalists to be arrested and jailed in Nigeria (*Libération* 11 Nov. 1996; *Jeune Afrique* 5-11 June 1996; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 24 June 1996; IPS 10 Sept. 1996; *The Economist* 22 Mar. 1997). According to Reporters sans frontières, they are also targets of other harassing tactics such as threats of bodily harm, murder attempts and the confiscation of newspapers (*La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 24 June 1996; see also *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 217; DPA 14 Aug. 1996). AFP reports that Article 19, an international organization that promotes freedom of expression, stated in a report that the Abacha regime was continuing to intimidate and harass the Nigerian media; the organization had reportedly recorded cases of arbitrary detention, torture and unfair trials of journalists, editors and publishers (7 Apr. 1997). Some newspapers such as the daily *A.M. News* and the weekly *Tell* have had to resort to subterfuge to avoid confiscation by the security services (*Le Monde* 3 May 1996; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 24 June 1996). Security officers often harass the editors of the weeklies *Tell*, *Dateline*, *The News* and *Tempo* and the daily *A.M. News* (*Country Reports 1996 1997*, 217; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). The *Swiss Review of World Affairs* claims, on the other hand, that journalists are rarely arrested (1 Oct. 1997), although other sources disagree (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). Professor Ihonvbere thinks rather that journalists are either writing fewer and fewer articles that could cause the government to take reprisals, or have left the profession (14 Oct. 1997).

In May 1996, three journalists were arrested over the course of the month (*La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 24 June 1996). George Onah of *Vanguard* newspaper was arrested twice for questioning—on 10 and 15 May 1996 (*ibid.*; IFEX 13 June 1996). The second time, he was held for a year before being released (Reuters 15 May 1997; *Africa*

Research Bulletin 23 June 1997, 12693; AFP 15 May 1997). On 22 May 1996, the editor of the newspaper *The Punch*, Tunje Adegboyega, was arrested; he was released two days later (*La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 24 June 1996; *Country Reports* 1996 1997, 217).

Alphonsus Agborh, a journalist with the daily newspaper *The Punch*, was arrested on 28 May 1996 at the newspaper's head office in Port Harcourt (*Jeune Afrique* 5-11 June 1996; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 24 June 1996; *Country Reports* 1996 1997, 217). The reason for his arrest is not known, but reports state that it occurred two days after the publication of an article on the importation of arms into Nigeria (*Jeune Afrique* 5-11 June 1996; IFEX 21 June 1996; *Country Reports* 1996 1997, 217). The journalist was freed on bail on 31 May 1996 (*La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 24 June 1996).

In June 1996, Federal Intelligence and Investigation Bureau (FIIB) agents arrested the managing editor of the newspaper *A.M. News*, Bayo Onanuga, along with four other people who worked for the newspaper; no reason has been given for the arrests, but it is thought that they are linked to the publication that week of an article dealing with the investigation of Kudirat Abiola's murder (AFP 19 June 1996). The article insinuated that Abiola's son was hiding arms in his home; his lawyer was furious and asked the FIIB to find out the origin of these allegations, which, according to him were unfounded (*ibid.*).

Bayo Onanuga was reportedly rearrested in August 1996, along with Babafemi Ojodu, another journalist working for the magazine *The News* (IFEX 16 Aug. 1996; Reuters 19 Aug. 1996; AI 15 Aug. 1996). Ojodu was freed on 13 August 1996 (*ibid.*; IFEX 16 Aug. 1996), while Onanuga was also freed in August after being detained for a week by the State Security Service (SSS) (Reuters 19 Aug. 1996; AI 19 Aug. 1996; AFP 17 Aug. 1997). They have not been charged; their arrests were reportedly triggered by comments they made about the oil minister in the magazine *The News* (Reuters 19 Aug. 1996; IFEX 16 Aug. 1996; AI 15 Aug. 1996). The authorities have reportedly questioned Onanuga about an article on General Abacha's wife that was published in *The News* (AFP 17 Aug. 1997).

On 31 July 1996, the authorities reportedly arrested Okina Deesor, a producer working for the *Radio Rivers* station; according to Mayor Obi Umabi, there is probably a connection

between Okina Deesor's arrest and his station's broadcast of the Ogoni national anthem on 18 July 1996 (CCPJ 23 Aug. 1996; *Courrier international* 12-18 Dec. 1996).

Dele Sobowale, a journalist with the *Vanguard* daily newspaper and an expert on economic and financial matters was held incommunicado by the SSS in late January 1997; observers believe that he was arrested because of an article in which he criticized General Abacha's economic policies (AFP 28 Jan. 1997; IFEX 28 Jan. 1997). He was released after five days (*La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 10 Feb. 1997, 5; Reuters 31 Jan. 1997b).

According to AFP, the situation of Tokunboh Oloruntoba and Okpara Nozie, who are respectively the chief editor and the administrative director of TNT (*Today's News Today*), has remained unclear since they were arrested on 19 March 1997; TNT officials had earlier been called to account for the publication of information that the authorities considered to be false (20 Mar. 1997). According to the Committee to Protect Journalists, two officials who were taken in for questioning at the same time were TNT news editor Tokunboh Oloruntoba and journalist Bola Owolola (IFEX 21 Mar. 1997). According to one source, Bola Owolola was released on 20 March 1997 along with Oloruntoba (IJC/IFEX 1 Aug. 1997). TNT director Owei Lakemfa has gone underground (IFEX 21 Mar. 1997).

Ladi Olorunyomi, a freelance journalist, was arrested on 20 March 1997 by security officers who ransacked her residence (Reuters 22 Mar. 1997; Africa Fund 26 Apr. 1997; Africa News 7 May 1997). Her husband, publisher of the opposition magazine *The News*, has fled the country (Reuters 22 Mar. 1997; Africa News 7 May 1997). She was reportedly freed early in May 1997 (*The New York Times* 8 May 1997; Reuters 15 May 1997; *Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1997, 12693).

After spending several months in prison for publishing an article on dissension within the army, Godwin Agbroko, publisher of *The Week* magazine, was released on 6 May 1997; he had been in prison since 18 December 1996 but no charges had been brought against him (AI 13 May 1997; Reuters 15 May 1997; *The New York Times* 8 May 1997).

Mohamed Adamu, a regional director of *African Concord*, was arrested in late July 1997 for criticizing General Abacha's chief of security (AFP 27 July 1997; *La Lettre de Reporters sans frontières* 8 Sept. 1997; *Time* 11 Aug. 1997). *African Concord* magazine is

owned by Chief Abiola (ibid.). According to the CDHR, Adamu was released in August 1997 (17 Oct. 1997).

Citing information provided by the Independent Journalism Centre - Lagos, African News reported on 8 October 1997 that a warrant had been issued for the arrest of Bayo Onanuga of *The News* magazine; Onanuga and other *The News* writers have reportedly gone underground. Towards mid-September 1997, police reportedly raided and ransacked the magazine's offices and arrested Wusu Babajidi, the highest-ranking employee present (neither the editor nor the director was there) (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). Wusu Babajidi was freed 10 days later after obtaining a court order for his release (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997).

6. STATE PROTECTION

In the summer of 1996 the Lagos state government launched a joint army-police undertaking known as Operation Sweep to combat violence and crime (*Africa Research Bulletin* 23 June 1996, 12277; NTA TV 27 Sept. 1996); in September 1996 the army and the police were joined by an additional reaction force called the "Neighbourhood Force" (ibid.). In addition, new security measures were to be added to the existing arsenal (ibid.). The CDHR believes that security forces' operations such as Operation Sweep in Lagos state and Operation Wedge in Ogun state have hurt the people more than they have helped, since numerous cases of extrajudicial killings, harassment of citizens and destruction of property have been committed by these law-enforcement groups (5 Sept. 1997).

According to IPS, nearly 500 Nigerians sought police protection in Lagos following the numerous bomb attacks that occurred in late 1996 and early 1997 (IPS 17 Jan. 1997). The Lagos police commissioner has stated that he has the discretionary power to grant or not to grant police protection in such cases, and that police protection could not be granted to all those who requested it (ibid.). According to the same source, security has all the same increased in the international airport, the border zones (ibid.), Lagos, Kaduna, Ibadan, Kano and Abuja (*New African* Mar. 1997). In addition, the authorities have intensified their efforts to identify those responsible for the attacks through the use of a special search unit (AFP

14 Feb. 1997). *New African* reported in April 1997 that despite General Abacha's promises to end terrorism in Nigeria, no concrete measures had been taken.

In September 1996, the CRP produced a report indicating that the police are ill-equipped to conduct proper investigations; the CRP demanded an end to the police practice of arbitrarily arresting and searching people on the street (IPS 10 Sept. 1996).

Radio Nigeria-Lagos reported in December 1996 that the army had been ordered to stop arresting civilians in an arbitrary manner (10 Dec. 1996). The Defence Department's acting information director, Colonel Godwin Ugbo, stated that the army needed to collaborate more closely with police when arresting civilians (ibid.).

Sources report that the state is unable to offer any protection to pro-democracy and human rights activists (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). Police and security officers often act on their own initiative, particularly when it comes to arresting opponents of the regime or human rights activists; they know that they have the backing of the government (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997).

Sources also indicate that it would be difficult for people belonging to one of these groups to settle elsewhere in the country since they would probably not be able to find any employment, especially if they are professionals, and would lose any possibility of having a family life (NADECO 2 Oct. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). They would have to adapt to a different culture and learn a different language, and social integration could be even harder than in a foreign country (ibid.; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). In any case, according to several sources, a person who settled elsewhere in Nigeria would be soon identified by the authorities and would probably start being harassed once again (ibid.; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). Momodo notes that all detainees must fill out a form indicating the names and addresses of the members of their extended family, as well as the name of their village chief; the authorities can always use this information to trace people after their release from detention (ibid.). In addition, there are numerous road blocks and checkpoints manned by security officers with a reputation for engaging in extortion and using violence and excessive force (ibid.; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 219).

The creation of a national human rights commission by the government in June 1996 (AI 1997, 245; *Country Reports 1996 1997*, 220; IPS 21 June 1996) has reportedly had little impact on the human rights situation in Nigeria (*ibid.*; IPS 1 Oct. 1997; HRW 1997, 42; AI 30 Apr. 1997, 1; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997). According to AFP, the commission's chairman did however, in September 1997, criticize the practices of the Nigerian security forces (17 Sept. 1997). The Detention Review Panel set up by the authorities in September 1996 to review detainees' cases and determine whether their detention is still justified (Radio Nigeria-Lagos 27 Sept. 1996) is reportedly of little use in practice (HRW 1997, 42; CDHR 17 Oct. 1997). The committee, which is led by senior security officers (AI 1997, 245; Radio Nigeria-Lagos 27 Sept. 1996) and which works in secret, reportedly has no judicial independence (AI 1997, 245).

Sources report that all in all, there is no legal recourse that offers effective protection to victims of arbitrary arrests or other means of intimidation (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997; Ihonvbere 14 Oct. 1997; Momodu 22 Oct. 1997). The lawyer Femi Falana has reportedly requested the court numerous times to be allowed to meet with his jailed clients, but in vain (*ibid.*). The CDHR states that the majority of Nigerians cannot afford a lawyer and that there is no real legal aid except that offered by organizations such as theirs (17 Oct. 1997). It is, moreover, useless to appeal to the courts if one does not know, as frequently happens, where exactly the detainee is being held (*ibid.*). In addition, the courts have no jurisdiction over the cases of people charged under Decree No. 2,⁹ and such people can thus be held without trial in prison at the discretion of the military authorities (*ibid.*). Even when the courts order a person released, the security forces do not necessarily obey (*ibid.*).

ADDENDUM

As this paper was being prepared for publication, the Research Directorate received a copy of an Amnesty International report dated 22 September 1997 entitled "Nigeria: No

⁹ The actions of government authorities thus fall outside judicial control (see Section 3.2) (CDHR 17 Oct. 1997).

Significant Change - Human Rights Violations Continue". This document is now available at IRB Regional Documentation Centres.

For further information and updates on this country, please consult the documentary sources and databases available at Regional Documentation Centres.

NOTES ON SELECTED SOURCES

Committee for the Defense of Human Rights (CDHR)

Founded in 1989 after the arrest of labour activist Femi Aborishade, the CDHR is a non-governmental organization for the promotion and defence of human rights that offers assistance to the most needy victims of human rights violations. It collaborates with other organizations working for the restoration of democracy and social justice. The CDHR, whose head office is in Lagos, has some 2,000 members and 19 sections, notably in the universities. The chairman of the CDHR is Femi Falana.

Professor Julius Ihonvbere

Originally from Nigeria, Professor Ihonvbere occupies the chair of African politics at the University of Texas in Austin. He has taken a three-year leave of absence to work with the Ford Foundation in New York as program leader on pluralism issues. Among other things, he deals with good government and civilian society projects in developing countries. Professor Ihonvbere is the president of the Organisation of Nigerians in America.

Dele Momodu

Dele Momodu is the editor of *Ovation*, a London-based magazine that publishes articles about prominent Africans. Originally from Nigeria, Momodu settled in Great Britain in July 1995. He was a journalist in Nigeria and continues to closely follow political events in Nigeria as well as the situation of journalists and opponents of the regime.

NADECO

The National Democratic Coalition (NADECO) includes political opposition groups and organizations working to establish democracy in Nigeria. Its head, Chief Enahoro, lives in exile in Washington. One of its leaders in Nigeria is Abraham Adesanya. NADECO has two offices outside Nigeria: one in London and the other in Washington. The NADECO secretary in London is Wale Osham.

Post Express Wired

The *Post Express* describes itself as an independent Lagos newspaper that is not affiliated with any political, cultural, religious, ideological or ethnic group. It is published in Lagos, Abuja and Port Harcourt. It says that it deals primarily with the prospects for and the means of bringing about justice in Nigerian life. The newspaper's editor is Stanley Macebuh and the

chair of its editorial board is Chidi Amuta. The information published by the *Post Express* that was used in this Question and Answer paper was obtained through The Africa Policy Information Center (APIC), an organization that is affiliated with the Washington Office on Africa and whose goal is to provide information and analysis in order to broaden the debate on African issues in the United States.

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