

News Release

November 8, 1995

No. 211

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT CONDEMNS CONFIRMATION OF DEATH SENTENCES IN NIGERIA

The Canadian government today condemned the confirmation by the Nigerian authorities of death sentences imposed by a military tribunal on nine human rights activists, including Ken Saro-Wiwa, a prominent author and nominee for the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize.

"This decision by the Nigerian military government flies in the face of international opinion and basic justice. I find it inconceivable that General Abacha's regime has chosen the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to declare acceptance of the tribunal's appalling judgement," said Secretary of State (Latin America and Africa) Christine Stewart. "We urge the Nigerian regime, in the strongest possible terms, not to carry out these sentences."

Mrs. Stewart, who is attending the CHOGM on behalf of Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet, will raise the issue today during her bilateral meetings with foreign ministers. She has been in contact with Mr. Saro-Wiwa's son, Ken Wiwa.

Mr. Saro-Wiwa is President of the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni Peoples, which has campaigned for the survival of his community and for environmental protection.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade
(613) 995-1874

