

**P R E S S   R E L E A S E**

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**DECLARATION BY THE PRESIDENCY ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
CONCERNING NIGERIA**

The European Union points out that it is now more than two years since the Nigerian presidential elections of 12 June 1993 were annulled despite the fact that observers both at home and abroad had judged them to be free and fair.

Since that time Nigeria has increasingly failed to honour its commitments on human rights, commitments freely entered into by Nigeria as a party to a number of international instruments. Continual and wide-spread recourse to detention without trial is a cause for grave concern, as are restrictions on freedom of expression and association. The European Union strongly condemns the recent arrests of civilian politicians. It is also concerned at the prolonged detention of eminent persons and by the recourse to procedures which are illegal or lacking in any legal basis. The European Union calls on the Nigerian authorities to make sure that all detainees are treated humanely and receive a proper trial, which includes the right to appeal to a higher court.

As it has underlined in its declaration of 22 March 1995, the European Union is of the firm conviction that Nigeria's current difficulties stem from a lack of political progress. On taking office in November 1993, President Abacha proclaimed his intention of restoring civilian democratic rule. While it has taken note of the announcement of 27 June on the lifting of the ban on political activities, the European Union regrets that the announcement of a timetable for a return to constitutional rule has once again been deferred and that political prisoners have not been released.

The European Union will continue to keep a careful watch on the situation in Nigeria to assess any further decisions which might be necessary to face up to developments in the political situation and in the human rights situation.