

Mr Salvador Ondo Ncumu
Minister of Justice, Religious Affairs & Penitentiary Institutions
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Malabo II, Frente al ministerio de comercio
Equatorial Guinea

Dear Minister,

I am writing to bring to your attention the case of human rights defender **Joaquín Elo Ayeto**, a member of Somos+ Platform and the political opposition party Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS), arrested on 25 February at his house in Malabo. No reason was given for his arrest. When he asked, he was only told "You will find out later".

He was taken to the Central Police station in Malabo where he was questioned about an alleged plot to kill the president. According to reliable sources, he was beaten severely at least twice while at the Police station and was hung up from his hands. On Friday 1 March, Joaquín was brought to court. The judge refused to look into Joaquín's injuries resulting from torture in police custody and instead told him that he would receive treatment in prison. The judge ordered his pre-trial detention at the Black Beach Prison. He has not been allowed access to his lawyer and family in detention since 2 March. He is yet to be charged.

I am extremely concerned for Joaquín's life, his well-being, safety and health condition.

I urge you, as Minister of Justice, to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of Joaquín Elo Ayeto, who has been detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. He has been arbitrarily arrested with no charges against him.

Pending Joaquín Elo Ayeto's release, I urge you to ensure that he has access to medical treatment and assistance he may require and that he is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment.

I would also urge you to immediately order thorough, impartial, effective and transparent investigations into allegations of Joaquín Elo Ayeto's torture while in police custody and ensure anyone suspected to be responsible is brought to justice in line with international standards of fairness.

Yours sincerely,