

President of the Republic of South Sudan
Salva Kiir Mayardit
Juba, South Sudan
Twitter: @RepSouthSudan and @PresSalva

Your Excellency President Salva Kiir,

I am writing to bring to your attention the case of Michael Rial Christopher, a South Sudanese and editor-in-chief of the Al Watan daily newspaper.

On 15 July 2019, Michael was arbitrarily arrested by the National Security Service (NSS) in Juba just after he had boarded a plane to Nairobi, Kenya. He is currently detained at the NSS headquarters, known as 'Blue House', without access to a lawyer. According to one of his relatives, Michael has not been informed of any charges against him.

In January 2019, after Michael published an opinion article supporting the protests in Sudan, the Media Authority and the NSS warned Al Watan not to report about the anti-government protests. Michael temporarily fled South Sudan in January 2019 due to death threats from persons he believes were NSS agents, and returned to the country in February. In March 2019, the authorities suspended Al Watan for operating without a license, an allegation that Michael denies.

I urge you to ensure that Michael Rial Christopher, is handed over to the police, brought to court and charged with a offence in accordance with international law and standards, or released; that he is granted regular access to his family, a qualified medical practitioner, and a lawyer of his choice.

Yours sincerely,