

Prime Minister Fiame Naomi Mata'afa
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
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Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to express my concern about Talalelei Pauga (Pauga), an Australian citizen with dual Samoan nationality, who is subject to an extradition request from the former Samoan Prime Minister Tuilaepa Sailele Malielegaoi (Tuilaepa) over an alleged plot to assassinate him. Because of his vocal opposition to the former Samoan Prime Minister, Amnesty International believes the charges against Pauga are politically motivated and without merit and that he may not receive a fair trial if extradited.

Under Australia's extradition laws with Samoa, minimal evidence is required for the Australian government to act on the extradition request from Samoa. As a result, Pauga has been detained in Australia since August 2020 (more than a year) without knowing the evidence against him. This raises serious concerns about arbitrary detention and the right to a fair trial.

Amnesty International and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers have expressed their concerns on the independence of judges and lawyers in Samoa following law reforms in 2020. In addition, the former Prime Minister Tuilaepa, now opposition leader in Samoa, continues to exert significant influence in the country that may undermine the right to a fair trial.

Samoa should re-establish its position as a leader on human rights in the Pacific region and ensure that no one is charged or imprisoned for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and political opinion.

I therefore call on you:

- To drop politically motivated charges against Talalelei Pauga, cease extradition proceedings and secure his release;
- If there is credible evidence that a crime has been committed, ensure that such persons receive a fair trial in line with international human rights law and standards; and
- Ensure a prompt, impartial, independent, transparent and effective investigations into any allegations of political interference, threats or intimidation to judicial officers or lawyers, in any cases related to the former Prime Minister Tuilaepa.

Yours sincerely,