

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER DETAINED IN GAMBIA

The founder and Director of a Gambian human rights organization, Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaeme, is being held in detention and is at risk of a six-month prison sentence. His trial is ongoing.

Nigerian **Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaeme** has run Africa in Democracy and Good Governance (ADG) since 2006. He faces charges of "providing false information to a public official", as although the organization is officially registered as a charity, it may not have Non-Governmental Organization status. The charges appear to be linked to the organization writing to the daughter of the President of Gambia last November, nominating her as an ADG ambassador in the context of celebrating World day for the prevention of child abuse.

Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaeme was first arrested on 22 February by the Immigration Department, but was released three days later. He was then rearrested on 1 March and has been detained since then. He was taken to court on 8 March, charged with giving "false information", but he refused to plead either guilty or innocent on that day because he did not have a lawyer with him. He was taken to court again on 10 March and charged with giving "false information to the office of the president that Africa in Democracy and Good Governance (ADG) is a Non Governmental Organization." He pleaded not guilty. His lawyer applied for bail for him but the judge denied it and remanded him in prison. The case has been adjourned until 22 March. He could be sentenced to six month's imprisonment or a fine of D500 (approximately \$20). He is currently detained in Mile 2 prison in Banjul.

Newspapers have reported that the authorities have also seized Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaeme's passport and speculate that the police may intend to deport him to Nigeria.

Amnesty International considers these charges against Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaeme to result solely from his activities as a Human Rights Defender and considers him to be a prisoner of conscience. Charges of "false information" are usually used in cases of fraudulent applications for identity papers, or where people give false identities to government officials.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English or your own language:

- Stating that Amnesty International considers the charges against Edwin Nebolisa Nwakaema to result solely from his activities as a Human Rights Defender and requesting that the authorities drop the charges and immediately and unconditionally release him.
- Reminding the Gambian authorities that action of this kind violates international and regional human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR);

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 APRIL 2010 TO:

President of The Gambia

Dr. Alhaji Yahya Jammeh
Private Mail Bag
State House
Banjul
Gambia

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of the Interior and NGO Affairs

Ousman Sonko
21 OAU Boulevard
Banjul
The Gambia
Email: oussonko@yahoo.com

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Nigerian Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ojo Maduekwe
Maputo Street, off Abidjan Street
Zone 3 Wuse District
PMB 130, Garki
Abuja
Nigeria
Email: omaduekwe@nigeria.gov.ng

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER DETAINED IN GAMBIA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In September 2009, President Jammeh reportedly stated on national television that he would kill anyone who threatened to destabilize the country. President Jammeh specifically threatened human rights defenders, and those working with them, by emphasizing that their security and personal safety would not be guaranteed by the government of Gambia.

UA: 61/10 Index: AFR 27/002/2010 Issue Date: 12 March 2010

