

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER ALLEGEDLY TORTURED

Human rights defender Joaquín Elo Ayeto was arrested on 25 February at his house in Malabo. He is accused of having information on a plot to kill the president. According to reliable sources, Joaquín was subjected to torture at least twice while at Central Police Station after his arrest which resulted in physical injuries. He was also threatened with death by police at the station. He is detained at Black Beach Prison. Since Saturday 2 March neither his lawyer nor his family has been allowed to see him.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

**Minister of Justice, Religious Affairs & Penitentiary Institutions
Mr Salvador Ondo Ncumu**

Ministry of Justice, Religious Affairs & Penitentiary Institutions
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,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Joaquín Elo Ayeto is a member of the opposition political party Convergence for Social Democracy (*Convergencia Para la Democracia Social*), (CPDS) and a member of the coordination body for Somos+, a civil society platform with around 15 young men and women working to challenge injustices affecting young people. The platform was established in 2015 to enable young people to respond to the arbitrary arrests of some of their peers during the Africa Cup of Nations.

Joaquín Elo Ayeto has been arrested and detained several times, including once in Black Beach Prison. On 29 November 2016, two military officers brutally beat him after he had posted an online article about an officer refusing to pay a road toll.

After this incident Joaquin Elo Ayeto went straight to the court to file a complaint against the two officers. He was told by a judge that his articles were giving the country a bad image. He was sent to Black Beach Prison in Malabo where he spent over a month. For the first five days of his detention he was held in isolation; subsequently he had access to some of his family and friends. When the judicial year resumed the magistrate decided to release him. He has never been told why he was sent to jail.

On 27 June 2017, Joaquín Elo Ayeto was again arrested. Earlier, Joaquin Elo and others from Somos+ had taken part in an event calling for justice for the killing of a young taxi driver, Jose Vidal Ndoing Micha, allegedly by the army. Two hours later, the police arrived at Joaquín Elo's home with a judicial warrant and he was taken to the Ministry of Security where he was interrogated and then sent to a cell. A week later he was released.

Joaquín was arrested for the third time on Monday 25 February 2019 at 6:00am. He was at his home in Malabo. He was in his room on the first floor when he heard some noise on the ground floor where his tenants were. When he came down to the ground floor, he saw seven police officers. One of them asked him if he was Joaquín Elo Ayeto and when he identified himself he was asked to wait outside as the officers went upstairs to his room. They took his camera, his laptop, his mobile phone, a USB and some magazines from his political party. He was arrested and first taken to the Central Police station (known as *Guantanamo*) in Malabo. He was brought before a judge on Friday 1 March.

When he was before the judge, Joaquín insisted on showing injuries he sustained from torture in police custody. The judge refused to hear his testimony. The only thing he said was that he would receive medical treatment in prison for those injuries. The judge ordered his pretrial detention at Black Beach Prison. On Saturday 2 March when his lawyer went to the prison to see him he was denied access. His family has also not been able to visit him.

You can find more information on the situation of Human Rights defenders and Activists via:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr24/9793/2019/en/>

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [Spanish]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [19 04 2019]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: [Joaquin Elo Ayeto] (He/Him/His)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: [N/A]