

URGENT ACTION

SICK ACTIVIST ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Saïkou Yaya Diallo, legal coordinator of the opposition group National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC in French), was arrested on 7 May and detained at the Judicial Police Directorate in Guinea's capital Conakry, following incidents at a political party conference. On 12 May, he was charged with "assault, violence, threats and public insults" and transferred to Conakry prison. Saïkou Yaya Diallo suffers from chronic diabetes which requires a strict diet and treatment. On 12 May, the Guinean authorities confirmed 58 cases of COVID-19 and 3 deaths in the prison.

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

Mamadou Lamine Fofana
Minister of Justice
BP: 564 Conakry
Email: malafof74@gmail.com

Dear Minister,

I am concerned about the detention of Saïkou Yaya Diallo, legal coordinator of FNDC, who was arrested on 7 May and detained at the Directorate of the Judicial Police. On 12 May, he was charged with "assault, violence, threats and public insults" and transferred to Conakry prison, where he has since been held.

His arrest is linked to the alleged forced imprisonment by FNDC members of a suspected government intelligence officer agent during a press conference on 25 March at the headquarters of the political party PADES. He and his colleagues reportedly put the suspected intelligence agent in an office while waiting for a crowd to disperse outside, presumably to protect the agent from potential violence from the crowd of opposition activists in retaliation to the killing of 12 people by security forces following controversial elections in the week before. According to several witnesses, Saïkou Yaya Diallo was not involved in any violence.

I am concerned about Saïkou Yaya Diallo's health whilst in detention, as he suffers from chronic diabetes which requires a strict diet and treatment. Furthermore, I am concerned that he is now at heightened risk of contracting COVID-19. On 12 May, the Guinean authorities officially confirmed 58 cases of COVID-19 and three deaths in the prison. Prisons are at risk of becoming a very dangerous hotspot for COVID-19 outbreaks. The United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture has urged all states to "review all cases of pre-trial detention in order to determine whether it is strictly necessary in the light of the prevailing public health emergency and to extend the use of bail for all but the most serious of cases".

I believe that Saïkou Yaya Diallo has been detained for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression. It is very important that states take urgent measures to protect those who are deprived of their liberty, especially by releasing all individuals who are held simply for peacefully expressing their human rights.

In light of the above, I urge you to:

- Immediately and unconditionally release Saïkou Yaya Diallo and drop all charges against him;*
- Ensure that, pending his release, Saïkou Yaya Diallo's has access to healthcare, water, the appropriate food for his diet, and regular access to his family;*
- End harassment and intimidation against members of pro-democracy activists in Guinea.*

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 25 March, a suspected government intelligence agent, claiming to be a journalist, was identified during a FNDC press conference at PADES party headquarters in Ratoma by FNDC members. FNDC members, including Saïkou Yaya Diallo secured the suspected government intelligence agent in an office and asked her why she was there and who had sent her. Saïkou Yaya Diallo called a bailiff to establish the presence of the intelligence agent. FNDC members said that she would be released after the press conference to avoid the crowd outside, fearing that she would be lynched by opposition activists in retaliation to the killing of 12 people by security forces following controversial elections in the week before.

The police subsequently raided the headquarters of the PADES. 11 individuals including Aicha Barry, spokesperson for the women's branch of the FNDC, were arrested. She was charged with "sequestration, violence and assault". She was released after eight days in detention at Judicial Police Directorate under judicial supervision.

According to the director general of the police interviewed by online news website Mediaguinée.com, the suspected government intelligence agent is neither a police or intelligence agent but administrative officer working at the Ministry of Security.

Leaders of pro-democracy movements and scores of protestors have been arrested and sentenced since 2019. On 22 October 2019, the Tribunal of Dixinn found Abdourahamane Sano, Alpha Soumah (alias Bill de Sam), Ibrahima Diallo, Bailo Barry and Sékou Koundouno guilty of "direct incitement to an unarmed gathering". Sano was sentenced to a year in prison and the others to six months. They were released on bail on 28 November 2019 pending their appeal.

On 7 March, Ibrahima Diallo and Sékou Koundono, pro-democracy activists of FNDC, were arrested in Conakry. On the day prior to their arrest, they were spokespersons at a press conference during which they accused Commissioner Fabou Camara, director of the Central Direction of the Judicial Police, of phone tapping, torture and other ill-treatment. On 9 March, they were charged with trumped up charges of assaulting a public officer and production and dissemination of data threatening public order and security. They were released on 13 March, but they still face charges and both remain under judicial supervision.

On 17 April, pro-democracy activist Oumar Sylla, alias Foniké Mengué, was arrested in front of his house in Conakry by Banditry Repression Brigade officers. Prior to his arrest, he spoke in a radio show during which he called for protest and accused members of the government and ruling party of killings, torture and other ill-treatment, and arbitrary detention. He was initially detained for one day in "villa 40", the office of the General Intelligence Directorate, then transferred to the Judicial Police Directorate. On 24 April he was charged with dissemination of false information.

FNDC are speaking out against a third presidential term, following changes made to the constitution by President Alpha Condé. On the day of his arrest, Saïkou Yaya Diallo was planning to participate in a radio show regarding the complaint filed by the FNDC against the President Alpha Condé.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: FRENCH

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [30 JUNE 2020]

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Saïkou Yaya Diallo (he/his)