

URGENT ACTION

33 MEN STILL ARBITRARILY DETAINED, ONE AILING

33 men are still in arbitrary detention at the National Security Service (NSS) headquarters in the Jebel neighbourhood of Juba, the capital of South Sudan. One of the men is Christopher Gwagbwe, an Episcopal priest in his sixties affiliated with the Charismatic Episcopal Church. His health is deteriorating in poor conditions of detention and he has been denied family visits since November 2015.

Amnesty International has knowledge of **33 men** still in arbitrary detention at NSS headquarters. They have been denied the right to be brought promptly before a judge and the right to challenge the lawfulness of their detention. Some detainees are being held incommunicado, without any access to family members or the outside world.

One of the men detained by the NSS is **Christopher Gwagbwe** who was arrested in September 2014 at his home in Juba. He is an Episcopal priest affiliated with the Charismatic Episcopal Church. He is over 60 years old and has high blood pressure. The conditions of detention are poor, including a lack of adequate ventilation and poor diet, and his health has been deteriorating. The NSS has neither charged Christopher Gwagbwe with any offence nor presented him in court. Though family members were initially allowed to visit him, since November 2015 NSS officers have repeatedly denied him family visits.

The NSS reportedly accused Christopher Gwagbwe of communicating with Alfred Ladu Gore, the deputy chairman of the Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army-In Opposition (SPLM/A-IO). SPLM/A-IO was part of the political opposition at the time of Christopher Gwagbwe's arrest. However in April 2016, a new Transitional Government of National Unity was established in South Sudan in accordance with an August 2015 peace agreement that also called for the release of political detainees. The new Transitional government now includes members of SPLM/A-IO such as Alfred Ladu Gore who is now the Minister of Interior in South Sudan.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Urging the South Sudanese authorities to either charge each of the 33 men with a recognizable offence, consistent with international law and standards, or immediately release them;
- Urging them to grant the 33 men access to adequate medical care, access to lawyers of their own choosing, and also allow visits from their families;
- Urging them to ensure that the 33 men are not subjected to torture or any other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Urging the authorities to initiate prompt, effective and impartial investigations into NSS detention practices, including enforced disappearances, torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 JUNE 2016 TO:

Minister for National Security in the office
of the President

Obote Mamur Mete

Ministry of National Security in the Office
of the President

Juba, South Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Paulino Unango Wanawilla

Ministry of Justice

Airport Road

Juba, South Sudan

Email: molacdgossjuba@yahoo.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Presidential Legal Advisor

Lawrence Korbandy

Office of the President

Juba, South Sudan

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 87/16. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr65/3916/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has documented an increase in violations committed by the NSS and other security agencies since conflict began in mid-December 2013. Cases of enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings and prolonged detention have been on the rise, with reports of torture and ill-treatment while in custody.

Amnesty International is concerned that in addition to these 33 men, there are others who are arbitrarily detained not only at the NSS headquarters in Juba but also in other NSS or military places of detention across the country. Detainees are fed a monotonous diet, and sometimes only eat once a day. They sleep on the floor and do not have access to adequate medical care. Some have been beaten, especially during interrogation or as a form of punishment. These poor conditions amount to ill treatment and may also amount to torture in some cases.

The NSS Act of 2014 grants the NSS sweeping powers to arrest and detain, without ensuring adequate judicial oversight or safeguards against abuse of these powers. The Act does not specify that detainees may only be held in official places of detention or guarantee basic due process rights, such as the right to counsel or to be tried within a reasonable period of time. The law effectively gives a carte blanche to the NSS to continue and extend its longstanding pattern of arbitrary detention, with total impunity.

Name: 33 men including Christopher Gwagbwe

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 87/16 Index: AFR 65/4016/2016 Issue Date: 12 May 2016