



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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Amnesty International slams sham trial that resulted in prison sentences for six men including activist Peter Biar Ajak

Amnesty International has slammed the 11 June 2019 South Sudanese court ruling that handed prison sentences to six South Sudanese men, including prominent academic and activist Peter Biar Ajak for promoting public violence and disturbing the peace, and businessman and philanthropist Kerbino Agok Wol for various crimes against the state.

The six men were initially arrested and detained without explanation. The violation of their rights has been overshadowed by this trial.

Throughout this trial, Amnesty International received reports of harassment and intimidation of defence lawyers, witnesses and even the arbitrary arrest and detention of a defence witness. This trial was far from being fair. The ruling must be scrutinized under appeal, or else the men must be granted a retrial in accordance with fair trial principles and accused's rights.

Throughout the trial, the court room was jammed with officers from the National Security Services (NSS) and the military, creating a tense and intimidating environment.

Background

The six men were on trial for their alleged role in an [uprising](#) that took place on 7 October 2018 in the main detention centre of the South Sudanese NSS headquarters, commonly known as the 'Blue House', where they were illegally held in extremely poor conditions.

Peter Biar Ajak was sentenced to two years in prison for promoting public violence and disturbing the peace while the other accused were sentenced for various crimes against the state, including possession of dangerous weapons and public violence. Kerbino Wol was handed a 13-year prison sentence. Simon Dau, the sixth accused, was sentenced to six years in prison while Bol Akech, Benjamin Agany Akol and Gar Duel Gar, the other three accused, were sentenced to five years' imprisonment each. Their lawyers have expressed their intention to appeal the judgment.

A petition was filed against the Government of South Sudan over the arbitrary arrest and detention of Kerbino Wol before the [East Africa Court of Justice](#) in March 2019.