

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

20 May 2022 index number: EUR 44/5639/2022

OBITUARY

- **Amnesty International mourns Professor Maurice Fangnon**

Prof. Maurice Fangnon was a brave activist who dedicated his life to defending the poor and oppressed. The 65-year-old human rights defender passed away in Lagos, Nigeria on 5 May 2022.

Prof. Maurice Fangnon was the Secretary General of the Centre for the Defence of Human Rights and Democracy in Africa (CDHRDA) until his death. CDHRDA works to defend human rights and promote true democratic values in Nigeria and other African countries. Prof. Maurice Fangnon has been actively working on addressing abuses committed against waterfront communities in Lagos State, Nigeria. He was relentless in the fight for equity, justice, and accountability.

“Prof. Fangnon’s recent victory over trumped-up charges brought against him for demanding justice for the dead, the missing and over 30,000 people forcibly evicted from their Ilubirin and OtodoGbame fishing communities by Lagos State authorities attest to his tireless commitment to take the long walk to justice for individuals and communities in Nigeria who faced human rights violations. His courage and resilience through the five-year punitive trial and persecution by the authorities was a demonstration of his inner strength to brace all odds in promoting human rights and justice,” said Osai Ojigho, Amnesty International Nigeria’s Country Director.

Maurice Fangnon, a native of Benin Republic has lived in Nigeria since 1981. He fled Benin during the military regime of then President Mathieu Kérékou following his arrest and detention for speaking out against human rights violations perpetrated by the regime. After his release in 1981, he came to Nigeria to seek asylum. He started out as an activist in the student union movement and was an active member of his community on social justice issues.

“He is indeed a brave human right defender who risked everything to shine a light on injustice,” said Osai Ojigho.

Amnesty International stands with his family at this moment of loss and deep grief. His human rights legacy and commitment to justice leaves us a great example and he would be sorely missed. We wish Prof. Maurice Fangnon’s family and friends, courage, and peace during this time of mourning.