

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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EQUATORIAL GUINEA: AUTHORITIES SHOULD SHED LIGHT ON THE FATE AND WHEREABOUTS OF FOUR OPPOSITION MEMBERS

Authorities in Equatorial Guinea should shed light on the fate and whereabouts of four opposition members who were reportedly abducted in South Sudan and transferred to the Central African country where they are currently detained, Amnesty International said today.

The authorities must ensure the human rights of Martin Obiang Ondo, Bienvenido Ndong Ondo, Feliciano Efa Mangué and Julio Obama Mefuman, who are members of the opposition “Movement for the Liberation of Equatorial Guinea Third Republic” (MLGE3R in Spanish) are fully respected and protected.

On 12 November 2019, they left Spain to travel to South Sudan. On 15 November 2019, they went missing while in South Sudan and their relatives learnt that they had been abducted and transferred to Equatorial Guinea. They were reportedly first detained at the Malabo Black Beach prison and then transferred to Mongomo’s new prison.

Two of the four men have been legally residing in Spain for more than 15 years, and the others are holders of Spanish citizenship. According to information received by Amnesty International, the authorities have denied the Spanish Embassy in Equatorial Guinea permission to visit them in prison.

This week, Equatorial Guinea ruling party issued a press release in which it linked the fate of the four opposition members to an alleged coup and assassination attempt against President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo in December 2017.

The party mentioned that some of the people involved in the alleged coup were living in Spain, and that the Equatorial Guinea authorities “requested through diplomatic channels the collaboration of friendly countries and international organizations”.

A mass trial regarding the alleged coup took place from 22 March to 31 May 2019. 112 defendants were convicted and received sentences ranging from one day and three years to 97 years. 55 defendants among whom Martin Obiang Ondo, Bienvenido Ndong Ondo and Feliciano Efa Mangué of the MLGE3R were tried in absentia.

According to a report released by the American Bar Association’s Center for Human Rights and as part of Clooney Foundation for Justice’s Trial Watch Project, the trial was marred by egregious procedural irregularities, including the President’s appointment of military judges and prosecutors by executive decree. It also violated fair trial guarantees that are part of every State’s obligations under international human rights law.

In recent years, several opponents of the Equatorial Guinean government have been arrested abroad including in Nigeria and Togo, before being brought into detention in Equatorial Guinea.

Amnesty International has also documented cases of human rights defenders and activists in Equatorial Guinea facing arbitrary arrests, attacks and persecution for their work.

The organization is calling on the authorities to promptly investigate and reveal the truth about the fate and whereabouts of these four opposition members and stop using the security agents to abduct people, including government critics who live abroad.