



To: Health Professional Network  
From: Health and Human Rights Team  
Date: 12 June 2007

## **Health Professional Action**

### **Denial of medical treatment**

#### **Felipe Ondó Obiang**

#### **Summary:**

Felipe Ondó Obiang, a prisoner of conscience imprisoned in Evinayong prison, on the mainland region of Equatorial Guinea, is reportedly suffering from hypertension and prostate problems for which he is not receiving medical attention. Amnesty International is concerned that he could be at risk of serious health problems if prison authorities deny him access to a qualified doctor, and to any medical treatment he may require.

#### **Background information:**

Throughout most of 2006, a doctor or nurse visited Evinayong prison monthly, providing medical care where possible and advising on the need for referral to a hospital or to a specialist doctor, where necessary. However, a change of policy in November 2006 restricted family visits to about 5-15 minutes daily and soon after that medical treatment was apparently suspended. Amnesty International has received information that at least since early January 2007 medical personnel have not been allowed to visit the prison, and prisoners have not been taken for treatment to the hospital or to see a doctor outside prison. In addition, the prison authorities do not provide medicines to those that need them. Denying sick prisoners access to a qualified medical officer contravenes the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners. AI understands that the policy denying prisoners medical treatment applies in all places of detention in Equatorial Guinea.

Felipe Ondó Obiang is one of the leaders and co-founders of the political party Democratic Republican Force (*Fuerza Demócrata Republicana* – FDR). He was arrested in March 2002, together with over 140 FDR members and charged with attempting to overthrow the government. He was convicted as charged, in June 2002, following a trial that failed to meet international standards, and was sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment. Sixty seven of his co-

defendants were also found guilty and sentenced to prison terms ranging from 6 to 20 years. Most of them have been released in several presidential pardons. However, 12 remain imprisoned in Black Beach prison on Malabo, the capital. Felipe Ondó was also held in Black Beach prison until July 2003 when he was transferred to Evinayong prison, apparently to separate him from the rest of his group.

Following his transfer to Evinayong, Felipe Ondó was chained to the bed by the feet 24 hours a day. According to recent information, he continues to be chained at night but not during the day. AI is concerned that such restraint could be tantamount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and in contravention of the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, articles 33 and 34, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 5.

**Recommended actions:**

Please write letters in Spanish, French or your language to the authorities listed below:

- Introducing yourself as a health professional, concerned about the denial of medical treatment, since at least 2007, to Felipe Ondó Obiang and all other prisoners detained in Equatorial Guinea.
- Expressing concern that lack of medical care may cause Felipe Ondó Obiang serious health problems.
- Urging the authorities to provide Felipe Ondó and all prisoners, with prompt and appropriate medical treatment, as provided for by international human rights standards including the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners.
- Calling on the authorities to improve the conditions in which the prisoners are held, in accordance with the UN Standards Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, ensuring that they receive food of adequate nutritional value, clothing and the opportunity to exercise, all of which are fundamental to the maintenance of an individual's health and strength.
- Calling on the authorities to ensure that the restraint of prisoners is in accordance with the UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, articles 33 and 34, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Article 5.

**Addresses:**

**Minister of Justice and Religion**

Sr Don Mauricio Bokung Asumu  
Ministro de Justicia y Culto  
Ministerio de Justicia y Culto  
Malabo  
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**Vice Prime Minister (in charge of human rights)**

Sr Don Aniceto Ebiaka Muete  
Vice-Primer Ministro  
Responsable por Asuntos Sociales y Derechos Humanos  
Gabinete del Vice Primer Ministro  
Palacio del Pueblo  
Malabo  
República de Guinea Ecuatorial

Copies to:

**Minister of Health**

Sr Don Antonio Martín Ndong Nchuchuma  
Ministro de Sanidad y Bienestar Social  
Ministerio de Sanidad y Bienestar Social  
Malabo  
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**Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation**

Sr Don Pastor Michá Ondó Bile  
Ministro de Asuntos Exteriores y Cooperación  
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores  
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**President of Parliament and the Parliamentary Human Rights Commission**

Sr Don Salomón Nguema Owono  
Presidente de la Cámara de Representantes del Pueblo  
y de la Comisión de Derechos Humanos de la Cámara  
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