

# URGENT ACTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER HELD INCOMMUNICADO

Human rights defender Joaquín Elo Ayeto continues to be detained in Black Beach Prison, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. He has been detained since 25 February 2019, when he was arrested in his home in Malabo. Joaquín was tried for defamation and threats against the President on 21 November 2019. Almost two months later, the sentence has not yet been read. On 2 January 2020, without any official notification or apparent cause, Joaquín was transferred to an incommunicado cell of the prison.

**TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER**

*Minister of Justice, Religious Affairs & Penitentiary Institutions*

*Mr Salvador Ondo Ncumu*

*Ministry of Justice, Religious Affairs & Penitentiary Institutions*

*Malabo II, Frente al Ministerio de Comercio*

*Equatorial Guinea*

*Dear Minister,*

*I am writing to bring to your attention the case of human rights defender Joaquín Elo Ayeto, a member of Somos+ Platform and the political opposition party Convergence for Social Democracy (CPDS). He was arrested on 25 February 2019 at his house in Malabo and accused of having information on a plot to kill the president. He is detained in Black Beach Prison.*

*According to reliable reports received by Amnesty International, Joaquín Elo Ayeto has been transferred to an incommunicado cell of the prison.*

*Information received indicates that he is not allowed to go to any recreational areas of the prison with the fellow inmates or to talk to them. There are also important concerns for the potentially poor hygiene conditions in his cell.*

*I am extremely concerned for Joaquín's situation. Joaquín has been arbitrarily detained. He was tried for defamation and threats against the President on 21 November 2019 and almost two months later he is still waiting for the sentence to be read. According to his defence, during the trial the prosecutor was not able to prove any of the charges against him. I urge you, as Minister of Justice, to immediately and unconditionally release Joaquín Elo Ayeto.*

*The circumstances of his arrest and development around his trial indicate that he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. Pending Joaquín Elo Ayeto's release, I urge you to make sure that all measures are taken to ensure that he is granted access to his family and lawyers and is provided with adequate medical treatment.*

*Yours sincerely*

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Joaquín Elo Ayeto, also known as Paysa, is a member of the opposition political party Convergence for Social Democracy

(Convergencia Para la Democracia Social) (CPDS) and a member of the coordination body for Somos+, a civil society platform made up of around 15 young men and women working to challenge injustices affecting young people. The platform was established in 2015 to enable young people to respond to the arbitrary arrests of some of their peers during the Africa Cup of Nations.

As a human rights activist and political opponent Joaquín Elo Ayeto has been arrested and imprisoned several times. On Monday 25 February 2019 it was the third time that Joaquín was arrested. It was at 6:00am. He was at his home in Malabo. He was in his room on the first floor when he heard some noise on the ground floor where his tenants were. When he came down to the ground floor, he saw seven police officers. One of them asked him if he was Joaquín Elo Ayeto and when he identified himself he was asked to wait outside as the officers went upstairs to his room. They took his camera, his laptop, his mobile phone, a USB and some magazines from his political party. He was arrested and first taken to the Central Police station (known as Guantanamo) in Malabo. He was brought before a judge on Friday 1 March 2019. When he was before the judge, Joaquín insisted on showing injuries he sustained from torture in police custody. The judge refused to hear his testimony. The only thing the judge said was that Joaquín would receive medical treatment in prison for those injuries. The judge ordered his pre-trial detention at Black Beach Prison.

On several occasions during his pre-trial detention his lawyers went to the prison to see him and were denied access. His family has not been able to regularly visit him either. In August 2019 there were serious concerns for the Joaquín's health as he experienced severe diarrhoea and some high fevers.

On 21 November Joaquín was tried at the Investigating Court Number 2 of Malabo. Defense lawyers have described the session as an embarrassing show in which the Prosecutor was not able to bring forward any proof that could suggest the implication of Joaquín in any of the charges against him.

Since the trial took place the lawyers have been going to the Court almost every day to see when the sentence will be issued. The only answer that they have received it is that the Judicial authorities are currently in recess and until the judicial year is resumed no sentence is expected. It is expected that the judicial activities will resume in January 2020, although there is not yet a confirmed date. Despite the recess, Duty Courts continue to operate.

You can find more information on the situation of Human Rights defenders and activists in Equatorial Guinea [here](#).

**PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET:** Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

**PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL:** [27 February 2020]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

**NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN:** Joaquín Elo Ayeto (he/his)

**LINK TO PREVIOUS UAs:**

**First UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr24/9981/2019/en/>

**Second UA:** <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr24/0888/2019/en/>