

URGENT ACTION

OPPOSITION LEADER IN NEED OF MEDICAL CARE

Alain Lobognon, a member of parliament of Cote d'Ivoire and founder member of the political party Generations and People in Solidarity (GPS), is being detained in Agboville Prison, in south-eastern Cote d'Ivoire. He was arrested in the capital Abidjan on 24 December 2019, and charged with 'publishing false news, undermining public order and the authority of the state'. He is in need of urgent medical attention.

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

M. Sansan Kambilé
Minister of Justice and Human Rights
Imm. Symphonie -Abidjan, plateau.
01 BP 2020 Abidjan 01
Cote D'Ivoire
Email: infos@presidence.ci

Dear Minister,

I am concerned about the medical condition of Alain Lobognon, member of parliament of Cote d'Ivoire, who was arrested on 24 December 2019 in Abidjan and charged with 'publishing false news, undermining public order and the authority of the state'.

Alain Lobognon suffers from high blood pressure and underwent surgery in 2019. On 23 March 2020, Alain Lobognon, who is detained pending trial in Agboville Prison, experienced symptoms of malaria. He remained in bed in his cell for four days. According to information shared in a letter by his lawyer and wife, his current poor health is due to poor detention conditions. His cell is infested with mosquitoes and insects due in part to the grating that serves as a roof.

I welcome the fact that the prison administration proposed that Alain Lobognon be checked by the prison doctor and nurse. However, as an opposition leader, Alain Lobognon fears for his life and would like to have access to his own independent doctor.

As Ivoirian authorities have suspended all visits to detainees from 18 March to 16 April to prevent the spread of COVID-19, Alain Lobognon cannot receive visits from his doctor and relatives.

In light of the above, I urge the Ivoirian authorities to ensure that:

- *Alain Lobognon receives any appropriate agreed medical care he might need. This is especially urgent as Cote d'Ivoire is dealing with cases of COVID-19 pandemic, which could further expose detainees to health risks;*
- *Pending his trial, Alain Lobognon's conditions of detention are in line with international standards, including access to water, food and regular access to his family. If contact visits are restricted due to COVID-19 prevention measures, they must be replaced with other means of contacting his family, by phone, video call or emails, for example;*
- *Alain Lobognon's right to a fair trial is upheld.*

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Guillaume Soro, a former ally of President Alassane Ouattara, is the leader of the Generations and People in Solidarity (GPS, Générations et peuples solidaires in French) political party. He had announced his candidacy for the 2020 October's presidential election and was returning to Abidjan when the Prosecutor issued a statement announcing an arrest warrant against him on 23 December 2019. He was charged with attempts to undermine the authority of the state and territorial integrity. In a separate case, he was also charged with misappropriation of public funds, concealment of misappropriated public funds and money laundering.

Ivorian authorities gave Soro permission for his private jet to land. But on his way from Le Bourget airport in France to Abidjan on 23 December he rerouted his flight towards Ghana.

Alain Lobognon, founder member of Generations and People in Solidarity (GPS) party, had told reporters on 24 December 2019 that the candidate's plane had been diverted "against his will" to the Ghanaian capital, Accra, preventing him from returning to "take part in the electoral process".

Security forces stormed the GPS headquarters shortly after Lobognon made his statement.

He was arrested with 16 other people related to the opposition during a wave of arrests which took place in Abidjan between 23 and 31 December 2019. Thirteen have been charged with 'publishing false news, undermining public order and the authority of the State.

Amnesty International considers that the timing of the legal proceedings against Guillaume Soro and the arrests of his supporters and relatives are highly suspicious. The charges appear politically motivated.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [15 May 2020]

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Alain Lobognon (his/he)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: N/A