

URGENT ACTION

DROP THE CHARGES AGAINST JAILED ACTIVISTS

Activists Oumar Sylla, Ibrahima Diallo and Saïkou Yaya Barry were arrested by the Guinean authorities on 30 July, solely for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and assembly. Oumar Sylla and Ibrahima Diallo are still detained at Conakry prison, waiting for their trial after they called for a protest on 28 July. On 12 October, Saïkou Yaya Barry was provisionally released under judicial control and evacuated to Tunis after his health deteriorated during his detention. The Guinean authorities must drop all charges and immediately and unconditionally release Oumar Sylla and Ibrahima Diallo.

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

Me Alphonse Charles Wright
Minister of Justice
Rue KA 003 – Almamyia
Commune de Kaloum
BP 564 Conakry – Guinée
Email: charlesalphonsew14@gmail.com

Dear Minister,

I am writing to raise concern for three activists, **Oumar Sylla, Ibrahima Diallo and Saïkou Yaya Barry**, who are being prosecuted solely for the peaceful exercise of their rights to freedom of expression and assembly.

Despite a national blanket ban on all protest “likely to disturb social peace”, on 28 July the National Front for the Defence of the Constitution (FNDC) organized a protest to denounce the unilateral way in which the political transition following the September 2021 coup was being managed by the authorities. Violence broke out between defence and security forces and protestors. According to the authorities, five people died and several more were arrested. On 29 July, legal proceedings were launched against FNDC leaders Oumar Sylla and Ibrahima Diallo, and Saïkou Yaya Barry, the secretary general of the Union of Republican Forces party which helped the mobilization effort for the 28 July protest, for “illegal protest, destruction of public and private buildings, incitement of a crowd, assault and battery, looting and arson, obstruction of freedom of movement and complicity”. On 30 July, the three were arrested. On 12 October, Saïkou Yaya Barry was released under judicial control following the deterioration of his health during his detention and evacuated to Tunis to seek medical treatment. Oumar Sylla and Ibrahima Diallo were also unwell and evacuated to Ignace Deen Hospital in Conakry for medical treatment respectively in August and September.

On 7 November, Ibrahima Diallo and Oumar Sylla started a hunger strike in protest of their detention and demanding that their fair trial – a date for which has yet to be set - be expedited. The same day, the prosecutor of the Tribunal of Dixinn in Conakry took an “order of partial dismissal of charge and referral to the criminal court”. The charges against the 3 activists were subsequently changed to “participation in an illegal protest, complicity in the destruction of public and private property, complicity in assault and battery”. On 15 November, Ibrahima Diallo and Oumar Sylla suspended their hunger strike.

Amnesty International recalls that Guineans have the right to express their opinions including through peaceful protests as per the international human rights obligations and commitments of the country. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights stated on 30 May 2022 that the ban of demonstrations laid down by the authorities was violating Guinea’s human rights obligations.

I urge you to ensure that all charges are immediately dropped, and Oumar Sylla and Ibrahima Diallo released.

In the meantime, I urge you to ensure their access to prompt and regular medical care as necessary.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The FNDC Movement (National Front for the Defence of the Constitution) is a coalition of civil society organizations and political parties that initiated a series of demonstrations in October 2019 in Guinea to protest against the amendment or adoption of a new Constitution. Since then, the FNDC has been at the heart of most of the demonstrations to denounce several human rights violations by former and current regime. On 8 August 2022, the Guinean transitional authorities decided to dissolve the FNDC, which they described as a “de facto movement” and accused it of having “always been known for violence against people, the degradation and destruction of public and private property, and acts of incitement to hatred.”

In May 2022, the Guinean authorities banned protests until the start of the electoral cycle.

This is not the first time Oumar Sylla (alias Foniké Menguè) has been targeted by the authorities in connection to his peaceful activism. In September 2020, he was arrested while mobilizing against President Alpha Condé's candidacy for the October 2020 presidential election. Following the presidential election, protests - some of which were violent - erupted to contest the results. Security forces responded to the protests by using excessive force when carrying out operations in some neighbourhoods which resulted in deaths. According to Amnesty International, at least 16 people were shot dead between 18 and 24 October 2020. In June 2021, he was sentenced to three years in prison for “communication and dissemination of false information, violence and threat of death”. In September 2021 he was freed after the newly appointed Attorney General ordered his release.

On 5 July 2022, he was arrested while holding a press conference. Two other activists (Billo Bah of TLP-Guinée and Djanii Alpha of FNDC) were forcibly taken with Oumar Sylla to the Directorate of the Judicial Police. They were charged with contempt of court and public insults. On 8 July 2022, the Tribunal of Dixinn in Conakry ordered their release. Only a few weeks later, Oumar Sylla was rearrested for the charges he currently faces.

On 7 October 2022, Saïkou Yaya Barry was evacuated and stayed at Sino-Guinean hospital but his health condition required adequate care in a better equipped neurosurgery centre; he suffers from headaches, visual blurring, and vomiting and several other pathologies according to his lawyer. So on 12 October 2022, he was conditionally released and allowed to travel to Tunis for treatment. According to Saïkou Yaya Barry's lawyer, after his recovery, he must report to the registry of the investigating office every Monday as a condition of his release.

On 7 November 2022, the judge ruled that Oumar Sylla and Ibrahima Diallo must remain in custody until they appear in court. On 8 November their lawyer wrote a letter to the public prosecutor in Dixinn calling for the opening of their trial.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 13 January 2023

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Oumar Sylla, Ibrahima Diallo, Saïkou Yaya Barry (All he/him/his)

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Lieutenant-colonel Mamady Doumbouya, President of the Transition - National Committee for Rally and Development (CNRD)

https://twitter.com/Presidence_gn

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