

URGENT ACTION

RELEASE DETAINED HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER

On 13 August 2024, Equatorial Guinean human rights defender, Joaquín Elo Ayeto, was transferred to Oveng Azem prison after being accused of illegal activities connected to the civil society platform, Somos+, which he is a member of and which the authorities claim is not legally registered. Since then, no one has heard from him. Also of concern is that at the time of his arrest Joaquín Elo Ayeto, according to his family, was suffering from both malaria and typhoid fever. The Equatorial Guinean authorities must grant Joaquín Elo Ayeto access to his family, lawyer and the healthcare he requires, and immediately release him as his arbitrary detention stems solely from his work as a human rights defender.

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

Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo

President of Equatorial Guinea
Palacio Presidencial de Guinea Ecuatorial
Avenida de Libertad,
Malabo, Guinea Ecuatorial
X/Twitter - @teonguema (Vice President)

His Excellency,

*I am writing to raise deep concern for arbitrarily detained human rights defender, **Joaquín Elo Ayeto**, known as Paysa, who has not been seen or heard from in over a year.*

Since his transfer to Oveng Azem prison, in Equatorial Guinea's eastern city of Mongomo, on 13 August 2024, over a year ago, Joaquín Elo Ayeto has been held in incommunicado detention with his family left not knowing if he is dead or alive. A couple of months ago, a relative travelled almost 400 kilometres to see Joaquín Elo Ayeto but on arrival was denied entry and told Oveng Azem prisoners are not allowed visitors. The denial of access of prisoners to their families and lawyers is a violation under international law.

Also of great concern is the fact that according to his family, Joaquín Elo Ayeto was battling typhoid fever and malaria at the time of his arrest. The fact his family has received no news on Joaquín's fate and wellbeing adds to their deep distress and need for answers.

Joaquín Elo Ayeto has been detained several times in connection with his work as a human rights defender. His detention is arbitrary and in violation of Article 13 of Equatorial Guinea's constitution as well as the country's international human rights obligations, namely the rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association.

In light of the above, I urge you to ensure the immediate release of Joaquín Elo Ayeto as he is detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his human rights. Pending his release, I call on you to guarantee full compliance with international human rights law by taking all necessary steps to ensure that Joaquín Elo Ayeto is granted immediate access to his family, lawyers and all necessary healthcare.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Joaquín Elo Ayeto 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 established in 2015 which carries out human rights work.

On 1 August 2024, he was arrested by members of the Gendarmerie who forcibly entered his house and took him away. He was taken to the Malabo gendarmerie station known as la Luna and on 9 August 2024, transferred to Malabo Black Beach prison.

Joaquín Elo Ayeto's arrest took place a few days after he, with some other representatives from Annabon island, visited the French embassy in Malabo. The purpose of the meeting was to reinforce cooperation between the embassy and the human rights platform Somos+. Somos+ was working to expose the human rights violations that were taking place in the Annabon island following the demonstrations of its inhabitants against the impact of some mining dynamite explosions taking place.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Spanish

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 20 February 2026

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Joaquin Elo Ayeto (he/his/him)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr24/8453/2024/en/>

ADDITIONAL TARGETS

Mr Enrique Bayeme Ela
2nd Secretary and Chargé d'Affaires
Embassy of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea
13 Park Place St James' SW1A 1LP
0207 408 0500
Embassy email: emb.londres@gob.gq
Consular Section email: emb.londres.seconsular@gob.gq
www.embassyofequatorialguinea.co.uk
Monday-Friday 09.30-15.00
Salutation: Your Excellency