

URGENT ACTION

ARRESTED ACTIVISTS' WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN

On 9 July, activists Oumar Sylla (alias Fonike Mengue) and Mamadou Billo Bah were arrested by defense and security forces in Oumar Sylla's home in Conakry, Guinea's capital. They have since been subjected to enforced disappearance, with their whereabouts unknown. On the day of their arrest, Oumar Sylla called on social networks for people to wear red clothes on 11 July to protest, among other things, against the crackdown on media and the high cost of living. The Guinean authorities must immediately disclose information regarding Oumar Sylla and Mamadou Billo Bah's whereabouts, protect their physical integrity and ensure the two activists are immediately and unconditionally released.

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

Prime Minister

Amadou Oury Bah

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Dear Prime Minister,

I am writing to express my grave concern regarding the enforced disappearances of **Oumar Sylla** (alias Fonike Mengue) and **Mamadou Billo Bah**. On 9 July, the two activists and members of the National Front for the Defense of the Constitution (FNDC), were arrested by armed defense and security forces in Oumar Sylla's house in Conakry, Guinea's capital. According to a press release issued by the FNDC on 10 July, they were subsequently taken to the Gendarmerie Headquarters and then to Kassa island, an army camp. Since then, Oumar Sylla and Mamadou Billo Bah have had no contact with their lawyers and families, and their whereabouts remain unknown. On the day of their arrest, Oumar Sylla had called on social networks for people to wear red clothes on 11 July to "protest against the closure of the media and the high cost of living, in particular power cuts and all the blunders of the transition".

On 17 July, your office issued a press release stating that no investigative body has carried out any arrest of Oumar Sylla and Mamadou Billo Bah, and they were not detained in any of the prisons in the country. According to the official press release, the two activists have been abducted.

I am deeply concerned for Oumar Sylla and Mamadou Billo Bah as they have been targeted simply for exercising their rights and now their enforced disappearances put their safety at risk. Furthermore, this follows the pattern of repression in Guinea. For several months now, the Guinean authorities have been stepping up their crackdown on peaceful dissent, with the suspension of media outlets, restrictions on internet access and the use of unlawful force at demonstrations, including the killing of at least 47 people during protests as of 22 April 2024. Amnesty International believes Oumar Sylla and Mamadou Billo Bah are being arbitrary detained solely because of their activism and criticism of the Guinean authorities, in violation of their right to freedom of expression as guaranteed by the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

I urge you to immediately release Oumar Sylla and Mamadou Billo Bah and ensure there is an effective investigation into their enforced disappearance, capable of bringing anyone suspected of criminal responsibility to justice in fair trials. Pending their release, I urge you to guarantee they are protected from torture and other ill-treatment while in detention.

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 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, which came to power following a coup d'état on 5 September 2021, 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.

Oumar Sylla and Mamadou Billo Bah have already been arbitrarily detained for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. In September 2020, Oumar Sylla 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. In September 2021 he was freed after the newly appointed Attorney General ordered his release. Oumar Sylla was again arbitrarily detained from July 2022 to May 2023. Mamadou Billo Bah was also arbitrarily detained from January 2023 to May 2023.

On 21 October 2022, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Guinean authorities signed an agreement for a 24-month transition in 10 stages, which was to lead to a return to constitutional order in December 2024. The government was dissolved on 19 February 2024, a new prime minister was appointed on 27. In March 2024, the new prime minister, Amadou Oury Bah, announced that the deadlines agreed with ECOWAS could not be met and suggested that the transition would now end in 2025, following a constitutional referendum in 2024.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 10 December 2024

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

NAME AND PRONOUN: Oumar Sylla, Mamadou Billo Bah (both he/him)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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