

URGENT ACTION

NEWSPAPER EDITOR DETAINED

Alfred Taban, a prominent journalist and chief editor of the daily English newspaper, Juba Monitor, was arrested on 16 July by South Sudan National Security Service (NSS) agents and is being held at the NSS Headquarters in Jebel neighbourhood. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Alfred Taban was arrested at 4pm on 16 July by NSS agents after responding to summons to report to the NSS headquarters in Jebel neighbourhood. There are no charges levied against him. His arrest is linked to an article he authored on 15 July as a response to the violent clashes that erupted in Juba on 7 July between government forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and forces loyal to First Vice President Riek Machar. In his article published on 15 July, Alfred Taban described the leaders' unsuccessful implementation of the August 2015 peace agreement and argued that both leaders "have completely failed" and should not "remain in their seats".

Amnesty International believes that the detention of Alfred Taban is due to the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression and thus considers him to be a prisoner of conscience.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the South Sudanese authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Alfred Taban;
- Urging them to ensure that pending his release, Alfred Taban is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment;
- Urging them to allow Alfred Taban unrestricted access to his family, a lawyer of his own choosing and access to adequate medical care.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 AUGUST 2016 TO:

Minister for National Security Service in
the office of the President
Obote Mamur Mete
Ministry of National Security Service in
the Office of the President
Juba, South Sudan
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister for Justice
Paulino Wanawilla Unango
Ministry of Justice
Airport Road
Juba, South Sudan
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:
Minister for of Information and
Broadcasting
Michael Makuei Lueth
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting,
Ministries Road
Juba, South Sudan
Email: makueimichael@yahoo.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Journalists in South Sudan face extremely precarious working conditions, and have been subjected to regular intimidation, harassment, arbitrary detention, ill-treatment, torture and, at times, extrajudicial killings.

Journalist John Gatluak Manguet was apparently targeted and killed by armed men on 11 July in Juba amidst clashes between forces loyal to President Salva Kiir and forces loyal to First Vice President Riek Machar throughout Juba. Reporter Peter Julius Moi was shot dead in the capital, Juba, on 19 August 2015, days after President Salva Kiir threatened to kill reporters working against the country. The Ministry of Information and the presidential spokesperson later said the statement was quoted out of context. George Livio, a journalist with Radio Miraya, has been held in detention without charge or trial since August 2014 by the NSS on accusations of collaborating with rebels.

Several newspapers have had their productions seized, some held temporarily, some confiscated entirely and others ordered to shut down. The print version of the *Nation Mirror* was closed down in January 2015 after a photo of Riek Machar was placed above one of President Salva Kiir. In August 2015 the NSS closed down *The Citizen*, a daily English language paper, and the Arabic daily newspaper *Al Rai*.

Cases of enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, extra-judicial killings and prolonged detention are common and have been on the rise since the beginning of the mid-December 2013 conflict, with reports of torture and other ill-treatment while in custody. The NSS has harassed, intimidated, and arbitrarily detained journalists and other dissenting voices, shutdown newspapers, and seized entire print runs of newspapers several times. These abusive practices have greatly eroded the right to freedom of expression and curtailed civic space in the country.

In October 2014, a National Security Service bill passed by the South Sudan National Legislative Assembly gave the NSS extensive powers of arrest, detention and seizure without adequate safeguards against abuse. The bill does not specify recognized detention sites or guarantee basic due process rights, such as the right to counsel or to be tried within a reasonable period of time as guaranteed by the Transitional Constitution of South Sudan (TCSS). In March 2015, the Justice Minister announced that the Bill, passed by the Legislative Assembly on October 8 2014, had become law. This is despite domestic and international opposition to its passage, the absence of the President's signature, and its unconstitutionality.

Amnesty International has repeatedly recommended that the NSS powers should be limited to intelligence gathering, as envisioned by the TCSS of 2011, which mandates the NSS to "focus on information gathering, analysis and to advise the relevant authorities." The powers to arrest, detain, conduct searches, seize property and use force should be explicitly excluded from the NSS's powers and exercised by an appropriate law enforcement agency.

Name: Alfred Taban

Gender m/f: m

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