

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST AUTHOR RELEASED AFTER SERVING SENTENCE

On 27 March 2025, Malian author and activist Etienne Sissoko was released after one-year of arbitrary detention, stemming solely from the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

NO FURTHER ACTION IS REQUESTED. MANY THANKS TO ALL WHO SENT APPEALS.

Malian activist, author and professor at the University of Bamako, **Etienne Sissoko** was released on 27 March 2025 after one-year of arbitrary detention, stemming solely from the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression.

On 20 May 2024, Professor Etienne Sissoko was sentenced to two years in prison, with one year suspended and a fine of XOF 3 million (approximately 4,500 Euros). He was convicted of "harming the reputation of the state", "defamation" and "dissemination of false news disturbing the public peace" because of his book, *"Propaganda, Agitation and Harassment – government communication during the transition in Mali"*, published in December 2023. On 14 October 2024, the Bamako Court of Appeal ordered his provisional release, pending his appeal. But the Prosecutor appealed the decision on the same day, keeping him in detention. Etienne Sissoko was detained in Kéniéroba Prison, 75 km from Bamako, Mali's capital, far away from his family and lawyers.

Amnesty International members and supporters sent letters and emails to the Malian authorities calling for his release and fellow Malian authors showed support.

On 10 April 2025, during a meeting with the new members of the National Human Rights Commission of Mali, the Minister of Justice displayed bags filled with correspondence and stated, "I received more than 8,000 emails from Amnesty International calling for the release of a single individual. It's harassment".

Etienne Sissoko addressed this message to all those who campaigned for his release, including Amnesty International members and supporters:

"Twelve months of confinement. Twelve months of silence, solitude, prayer, and writing. These twelve months were more than just a struggle; they were a pilgrimage. An inner journey toward endurance and listening. A journey to that place within oneself where one learns not to betray what is believed to be right, even in the darkest times. I extend my gratitude to the national and international press, to friends, colleagues, comrades, and students who maintained their vigil with dignity. Thank you to the human rights organizations, especially Amnesty International, and to the individuals who bravely demanded justice."

Amnesty International will continue to campaign for the release of those detained in Mali solely for peacefully exercising their human rights.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Etienne Sissoko (he/his)

THIS IS THE THIRD AND FINAL OUTPUT FOR UA 49/24

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr37/8672/2024/en/>

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