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Mr Mahamadou Kassogué
Minister of Justice and Human rights
Cite administrative – batiment 12
BP 97 Bamako
Mali

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Dear Minister,

**I am deeply concerned with the continued arbitrary detention of Étienne Sissoko when he should never have spent a single day in prison.**

On 14 October, the Bamako Court of Appeal ordered the provisional release of author, activist and professor, Étienne Sissoko pending his appeal – set for 11 November 2024, but the Prosecutor appealed the decision on the same day, keeping him in detention. Étienne Sissoko therefore remains held in Kéniéroba Prison, 75 km from Bamako, Mali’s capital, far away from his family and lawyers

On 20 May 2024, Professor Étienne Sissoko was sentenced to two years in prison, with one year suspended. 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.

Étienne Sissoko’s detention stems solely from the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. Arrest or detention as punishment for the peaceful exercise of human rights, including the right to freedom of expression, is arbitrary and violates the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Mali is a state party.

**In light of the above, I call on you to take all necessary steps to ensure that Étienne Sissoko is immediately and unconditionally released and his conviction and sentence quashed.**

Yours sincerely.

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**Copie**

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