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Presidente de Guinea Ecuatorial
Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo
Palacio Presidencial de Guinea Ecuatorial
Avenida de Libertad
Malabo
Guinea Ecuatorial

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His Excellency,

**I am writing to bring to your attention the case of human rights defender, Joaquín Elo Ayeto, a member of civil society platform Somos+ and the political opposition party Convergence for Social Democracy, who was arrested on 1 August and is currently being detained in Oveng Azem prison, in Equatorial Guin-ea’s eastern city of Mongomo.**

On 1 August, Joaquín Elo Ayeto was in his house in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea’s capital, when he was arbitrary arrested by members of the Gendarmerie who forcibly entered the house and took him away. He was taken to the Malabo gendarmerie station known as la Luna. Once there, he was accused of carrying out illegal activities through his organization Somos + which, they said, has not been properly registered. Three days later, on 4 August, Joaquin Elo Ayeto’s lawyer went to the gendarmerie station where he was also arrested and accused of representing an illegal organization. He was detained there for more than 48 hours, until he was released on 6 August. On 9 August, Joaquín Elo Ayeto was transferred to Malabo Black Beach prison and on 13 August to Oveng Azem prison where he is currently held in pre-trial detention.

In June 2020, Joaquín Elo Ayeto applied for registration of Somos+ to the Ministry of Interior and Local Corporations. However, several days later, he was notified that the application should be validated by the General Direction of Human Rights, although such validation is not required by the law.

I would like to remind you that Article 13 of the Equatorial Guinea Constitution guarantees the rights to freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly.

**In light of the above, I urge you to immediately release Joaquin Elo Ayeto as his arbitrary detention stems from his peaceful activism and the exercise of his constitutional rights of freedom of association, expression and peaceful assembly. Pending his release, I urge you to ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment and has access to a lawyer, who must be allowed to carry out their work freely and without fear of reprisal.**

Yours sincerely,

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**Copie**

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