



Ana Gomes

Member of the European Parliament

Catherine Ashton
High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

Brussels, 04 July 2014

Subject: Detention of Roberto Berardi in Equatorial Guinea

Dear Cathy,

Roberto Berardi, an Italian citizen and former business partner of President Obiang's eldest son, has been in custody since January 2013 in Equatorial Guinea, in an apparent effort to prevent him from disclosing information about the son. According to Human Rights Watch, Berardi has become seriously ill yet has been denied medical treatment. His family said Berardi's January 2013 arrest came after he asked his business partner, Teodoro ("Teodorín") Nguema Obiang Mangué, about a suspicious bank transfer to a US account. The transfer was cited as evidence by the United States Justice Department in a civil complaint accusing Teodorín of laundering the proceeds of alleged corruption.

After a brief trial in which Berardi's family says no evidence was presented to support the charges of theft of company property and fraud, he was convicted in mid-2013 and sentenced to more than two years in prison. According to his family, Berardi has been subjected to torture, long periods of solitary confinement, inhumane conditions of detention, and frequent denial of access to medical attention and legal counsel. His lawyer, Ponciano Mbomio Nvó, has himself been the victim of intimidation and reprisals.

I urge you, thus, to publicly press President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo of Equatorial Guinea to immediately release an Mr. Berardi, at least for humanitarian reasons, and ensure he gets prompt medical treatment.

Best regards,

Ana Gomes