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Federica Mogherini

High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission

Brussels, 6 March 2018

Dear Federica,

On 26 February, the main opposition party in Equatorial Guinea, the Citizens for Innovation (CI), was dissolved and 34 of its members sentenced to 44 years in prison, following a court ruling. The trial was part of a process involving 147 opposition activists accused of charges of “sedition, rebellion, attacks against authority, public disorder and serious injury and damage”. The prosecutor was originally seeking the death penalty.

The activists were arrested following elections in November. In mid-February, CI said in a statement that about 30 defendants were not able to stand up at the trial due to the severe torture inflicted while they were in detention at police headquarters in the capital Malabo, aptly nicknamed “Guantanamo”. With the elections, CI was the only party to elect an opposition member – who also has, since then, been arrested as part of the on-going trial.

CI also said that the prosecutor intended “to hide or to silence the atrocities and the brutality of the crimes of torture”.

Corruption, poverty, and repression continue to be commonplace in Equatorial Guinea as its authorities constantly harass, intimidate and detain human rights advocates and opposition militants. The country lives in a dictatorship imposed by President Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo since 1979 – who has repeatedly suppressed freedoms of speech and assembly, arbitrarily imprisoning dissident voices and imposing a campaign of abuses, corruption and torture upon the people. Despite its vast oil wealth, the majority of the population lives in poverty and sex trafficking and forced labour are still a reality.

I welcome the EEAS Spokespersons’ statement earlier this month condemning the “deterioration of the human rights situation” in Equatorial Guinea, following the death of Ebee Ela, who died while in police custody and exhibited physical signs of violence, according to reports.

Still, this case is not an isolated one. It’s part of a larger effort by the ruling regime to silence political opponents and consolidate the autocracy – justifying its actions on an alleged *coup d’état*, which the President claims was attempted in late December by mercenaries from Chad, Sudan and the Central African Republic and “prepared on French territory”. So far, no proof has emerged to sustain this claim.

Equatorial Guinea is part of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries since 2014 and its accession was conditional to the fulfilment of certain conditions, which included, among others, the abolishment of the death penalty and the democratisation of the regime. Both of which are yet to be implemented.



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Bearing these issues in mind, I would ask if you have been following these recent events and the increasingly alarming situation in Equatorial Guinea, and what you envision the role of the EU to be in relation to a country whose regime grossly undermines the moral obligations of human rights.

*Best regards,  
Ana Gomes*

Ana Gomes  
Member of the European Parliament