

URGENT ACTION

DAVID TAM BARYOH FREED ON BAIL

Sierra Leonean journalist David Tam Baryoh, was released on bail on 14 November, after 11 days detained without charge in a maximum security prison. He now has to report to the police every Monday. He is a prisoner of conscience, arrested solely for exercising his right to freedom of expression.

Police arrested **David Tam Baryoh** on 3 November at his office in the capital, Freetown. They showed him an Executive Detention Order signed by President Ernest Bai Koroma, which accused him of incitement. A Government press release issued on 7 November, explaining the arrest, said that his statements were likely to incite public hatred, disaffection and instability. Two days earlier, David Tam Baryoh had interviewed an opposition party spokesman on the independent radio station Citizen FM. The spokesman criticized the government's handling of the Ebola outbreak and raised concerns about the authorities' management of the Ebola crisis response fund. During the interview David Tam Baryoh criticized President Koroma's presumed intention to run for a third term in office.

David Tam Baryoh was detained at Freetown's maximum security Pademba Road Prison, where a doctor examined him on 3 and 5 November. The doctor indicated that David Tam Baryoh was suffering from high blood pressure and should be taken to hospital for immediate medical care. He was admitted to the prison's hospital. Local and international civil society groups, as well as the British parliament, have criticised the arrest and called for his release. As his release on 14 November was not unconditional, Amnesty International still considers him a prisoner of conscience.

Please write immediately in English or your own language:

- Urging the authorities to release David Tam Baryoh unconditionally;
- Calling on them to ensure that the right to freedom of expression is not unnecessarily restricted during and after the Ebola crisis and that everyone is able to enjoy this right in conformity with international and regional human rights law and that journalists can carry out their work freely and without hindrance, intimidation or harassment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 1 JANUARY 2015 TO:

President of the Republic

Ernest Bai Koroma

The President

State House

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Email: jkawusu-konte@statehouse.gov.sl

and jaramenajara@yahoo.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Justice

Frankly Bai Kargbo

Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Ministry of Justice

3rd Floor, Guma Building

Lamina Sankoh Street

Freetown, Sierra Leone

Fax: +232 22 22 93 66 / 22 49 40

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 281/14. Further information:

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR51/002/2014/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

David Tam Baryoh was arrested during an unprecedented health crisis in Sierra Leone. On 25 May the government declared an outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) following the laboratory confirmation of a suspected case from Kailahun District. President Ernest Bai Koroma, in an initial broadcast to the nation on 30 July, proclaimed a state of Public Health Emergency. This was aimed at enabling the government and its partners to take a more robust approach to dealing with the Ebola outbreak. He established a Presidential task force to champion the implementation of various measures to fight the disease. This was followed by other regulations on 7 August. The government's response to the Ebola outbreak has led to unnecessary restrictions on freedom of expression and free speech via bylaws for the prevention of Ebola and other diseases and the public Emergency Regulations Act.

David Tam Baryoh had been arrested in January 2014 for seditious libel and in May his radio programme "Monologue" was banned for two months under a government directive.

Name: David Tam Baryoh

Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 281/14 Index: AFR 51/003/2014 Issue Date: 20 November 2014

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