

# URGENT ACTION

## DETAINED ACTIVIST DENIED ACCESS TO A LAWYER

**Peter Biar Ajak, a prominent South Sudanese academic and activist, was arrested by the National Security Service (NSS) at Juba International Airport on Saturday 28 July. He is being held at the NSS Headquarters in Juba. He has not been informed of the reason for his arrest and has thus far been denied access to a lawyer.**

**Peter Biar Ajak** is a Harvard educated South Sudanese academic, activist and chairperson of the South Sudan Young Leaders Forum. He was arrested by NSS agents at Juba International Airport on Saturday 28 July as he was preparing to travel to Aweil to attend a youth forum he had organised. Peter has been a vocal critic of the South Sudan government.

Upon his arrest, he was presented with an arrest warrant bearing a date that was at least one week old.

Even though his family has been allowed to visit him at the NSS headquarters in Juba, Amnesty is concerned he may be held in solitary confinement. He has been denied access to a lawyer. He is yet to be brought before a court and the reason for his arrest remains unclear. However, it is believed that his arrest is linked to the youth forum that he intended to hold in Aweil.

### 1) TAKE ACTION

**Write a letter, send an email, call, fax or tweet:**

- Calling on South Sudanese authorities to release Peter Biar Ajak or charge him with a recognizable criminal offence in accordance with international law and standards;
- Calling on South Sudanese authorities to ensure that Peter Biar Ajak is not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Calling on them to ensure Peter Biar Ajak is granted regular access to his family, any healthcare he may require and a lawyer of his choice;
- Urging them to comply with their obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), particularly the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil the rights to freedom of association and expression.

**Contact these two officials by 11 September, 2018:**

[President of the Republic of South Sudan](#)

Salva Kiir Mayardit

Twitter: [@RepSouthSudan](#)

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

[Ambassador Garang Diing Akuong](#)

[Embassy of the Republic of South Sudan](#)

1015 31st Street NW Suite 300,

Washington, DC 20007

Phone: 202 293 7940 | Fax: 202 293 7941

Email: [info@erssdc.org](mailto:info@erssdc.org)

Contact form: <http://www.southsudanembassyusa.org/contact/>

**Salutation: Dear Ambassador**

### 2) LET US KNOW YOU TOOK ACTION

[Click here](#) to let us know if you took action on this case! *This is Urgent Action 143.18*

Here's why it is so important to report your actions: we record the actions taken on each case—letters, emails, calls and tweets—and use that information in our advocacy.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the start of South Sudan's internal armed conflict in December 2013, hundreds of people, mostly men, have been detained under the authority of the National Security Service (NSS) and Military Intelligence Directorate in various detention facilities across the capital city, Juba. Many of those who have been detained have been held under the category of "political detainees" on allegations that they have communicated with or supported the opposition.

Amnesty International has documented numerous arbitrary detentions by the NSS in multiple facilities where detainees are often subjected to torture and other ill-treatment – some held incommunicado without access to a lawyer, or family members. Others have been forcibly disappeared. In the NSS prison headquarters in the Jebel Neighbourhood, detainees are fed a monotonous diet of beans and *posho*. Most detainees sleep on the floor. Some have been badly beaten, especially during interrogation, or as a form of punishment. Due to the poor conditions of the prisons, as well as inadequate access to medical care, the health of those detained often deteriorates.

Prolonged and arbitrary detention, enforced disappearances and torture and other ill-treatment have all been frequently employed by the authorities in South Sudan since the initial outbreak of the conflict in December 2013. But there appears to have been an increase in the targeting of those seen to be aligned with the opposition following the clashes between government and opposition forces in Juba in July 2016 as part of the government's increasingly brutal counter-insurgency campaign against real and perceived opponents.

South Sudan's political environment has become increasingly intolerant of any form of criticism of government actions and policies, leading to intimidation, harassment and detention of civil society activists, human rights defenders and independent journalists. This has led to an environment of self-censorship for media and human rights workers where, with the pervasive state surveillance, people no longer feel safe to speak freely and openly about the country's ongoing conflict.

Name: Peter Biak Ajak

Gender m/f: m

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