

Ambassador Musa Ilu Mohamed
Embassy of the Federal Republic of Nigeria
PO Box 628
SE-101 32 Stockholm
Sweden

Your Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern about the arrest and detainment of Mubarak Bala, a prominent humanist in Nigeria. He is currently detained at the command of Kano state police.

On 28 April, Mubarak Bala was arrested by police officers at his home in Kaduna after writing a post on Facebook expressing his beliefs. A law firm in Kano-state considered this a violation of paragraph 26(1)(c) of the law on cybercrime and reported him. He was arrested and detained at Gbabasawa Police Station, Kaduna. On 30 April, he was transferred to Kano, outside his home state, where he is being held in police custody.

According to the Nigerian Constitution Mr Bala has the right to talk to his lawyer in order to defend himself. However, he has not been given access to either his lawyer nor his family.

Local organisations are worried about threats against Mr Bala's life. The police also justify keeping his whereabouts secret in order to ensure his safety. Reportedly, the police have not clarified if Mr Bala has been charged of any crime for the same reason. The government is responsible for Mr Bala's safety whether he is charged of any crime or not. If the Kano police cannot guarantee Mr Bala's safety, he should be released and escorted to his home safely or transferred to a judicial authority that would be able to protect him from attacks.

I therefore, humbly petition your intervention to ensure that:

- Mubarak Bala is released immediately and unconditionally;
- the threats against Mr Bala's life are addressed and mitigated, and that he is provided the full protections guaranteed by the Nigerian Constitution and international law;
- Mr Bala's situation is clarified immediately and he is given access to his lawyer;
- any further prosecution will be transferred to an area where the state can ensure Bala's safety;
- the longstanding marginalisation of religious minorities and non-believers in states that practice sharia laws is addressed.

Sincerely,