



CLOONEY FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE: NIGERIAN JOURNALIST MUST BE RELEASED ON BAIL

DATE OF ARREST

August 3, 2019

CHARGES

Treason, Cyber Stalking and
Money Laundering

DATE OF ORDER OF RELEASE

November 6, 2019

TRIALWATCH PARTNER MONITORING THE TRIAL

American Bar Association Center
for Human Rights

STATEMENT

November 22, 2019 – The Clooney Foundation for Justice's TrialWatch initiative has been monitoring the trial of Omoyele Sowore in Nigeria.

While Mr. Sowore's trial is still ongoing, the Clooney Foundation for Justice is concerned by Mr. Sowore's continued detention. On October 21, 2019, the Federal High Court of Abuja reduced the conditions under which Mr. Sowore could be granted bail – eliminating a cash bail requirement and requiring that Mr. Sowore not speak publicly about political issues and remain within a particular region of Nigeria. According to defense counsel, Mr. Sowore met those conditions on November 5. The court then issued an order dated November 6 that explicitly stated that Mr. Sowore "has been Released." But Nigeria's Department of State Services (DSS) has not released Mr. Sowore and he remains in custody more than 15 days after this judicial decision.

Amal Clooney, co-President of the Clooney Foundation for Justice, said "It is outrageous that Nigeria continues to imprison a journalist and Presidential candidate after a court has ordered his release. TrialWatch will continue to monitor Mr. Sowore's trial and calls on the authorities to implement the court's order as soon as possible."

BACKGROUND

Mr. Sowore is a journalist, former presidential candidate, and opposition critic who founded the investigative online news outlet Sahara Reporters, which covers political matters in Nigeria and is often critical of the government.

On August 2, 2019, Mr. Sowore tweeted, "All that is needed for a #Revolution is for the oppressed to choose a date they desire for liberty, not subjected to the approval of the oppressor." He was arrested the next day, detained and charged with treason for allegedly "threatening public order and safety." In September, the authorities added new charges, alleging that Mr. Sowore had spread false information about Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari that incited hatred of Buhari and that he had unlawfully transferred funds into a Sahara Reporters bank account. If convicted of these charges, he could face the death penalty.

TrialWatch will continue monitor this trial, including the upcoming hearing set for December 5, 2019.



ABOUT THE CLOONEY FOUNDATION FOR JUSTICE'S TRIALWATCH INITIATIVE

The Clooney Foundation for Justice's TrialWatch initiative monitors criminal prosecutions of vulnerable persons around the world. For more information, go to www.trialwatch.com.