

Dr. Agnès Callamard
Secretary General
Amnesty International
1 Easton Street
London WC1 0DW



21 December 2021

#FreeLukaB

Dear Dr. Callamard,

I write to urge Amnesty International to join CSI, the Committee to Protect Journalists and many others in calling for the immediate release of the incarcerated Nigerian journalist and human rights defender Luka Binniyat, and for the dropping of all charges against him.

Mr. Binniyat was arrested on 4 November on the order of Kaduna State's Commissioner of Internal Security Samuel Aruwan. The Commissioner accused Binniyat of defamation and cyberstalking in response to an article published in the *Epoch Times* that highlighted the security agent's role in obfuscating an act of genocide committed by nomadic Fulani tribal militias against the indigenous people of Kaduna. Since then, Binniyat has been held without bail at the Kaduna Correctional Institution.

Binniyat has long been an outspoken critic of the consistent failure of the Nigerian authorities, especially Kaduna's Fulani Governor Nasir El-Rufai, to prevent atrocity crimes committed by Fulani tribal militias and to prosecute perpetrators. He has been jailed twice before, spending 90 days in jail in 2017.

At that time, the then National Secretary of the Nigeria Union of Journalists (NUJ), Shuaibu Usman Leman, defended Binniyat vigorously, stating:

“El Rufai's numerous actions are clearly aimed at his perceived political opponents which ridiculously include the media. As a result of his intolerance for criticisms and aversion for the media, many Journalists in the State are now being persecuted by the government ... We are terrified by the remanding of Binniyat in prison custody ...”

To forestall a similar protest in response to Binniyat's most recent detention, Commissioner Aruwan was dispatched to the NUJ to warn them against campaigning for the freedom of their imprisoned colleague. The Commissioner stated that the case against Binniyat had implications for the peace and security of the state.

Earlier this year, Amnesty International reported:

“On many occasions, the Nigerian authorities have continued to respond with violence

and threats to individuals and groups who express dissenting opinions. Law enforcement agencies often fail to protect the right to freedom of expression, endangering the lives of those who dare to criticize authorities, those in power or institutions.”

The continuing persecution of Binniyat for exposing atrocity crimes and their perpetrators conforms to this coercive, anti-democratic pattern of behaviour, as described by Amnesty International.

By raising its voice now, Amnesty International can help hasten the end of Luka Binniyat’s incarceration, and signal to the Nigerian authorities that they cannot imprison and otherwise intimidate journalists with impunity.

Let us do our utmost to **Free Luka Binniyat**.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Eibner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. John Eibner
International President
Christian Solidarity International (CSI)