

Nigerians angry over arrest of political blogger

LAGOS - Nigerian civil rights groups condemned the government after the arrest of a news blogger by an anti-graft agency sparked concerns about freedom of speech in the vast African country.



Image by 123RF

Abubakar Usman, the founder of popular political blog abusidiqu.com, was arrested at his Abuja home on Monday by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) for allegedly "cyber stalking".

Last week, Usman published a post claiming that EFCC boss Ibrahim Magu was "bullying" his staff.

The blogger is a known supporter of President Muhammadu Buhari and is a founding member of the ruling party's youth wing.

The All Progressive Congress Youth Forum said in a statement that the EFCC, which is designed to tackle endemic fraud in the country, had "obviously overstepped its jurisdiction".

The Socio-Economic Rights and Accountability Project (SERAP), a high-profile civil rights group in Nigeria, said: "Nigerians should be allowed to talk freely without threats of arrest or harm."

Members of Nigeria's official opposition voiced fears that bloggers who support their party would be arrested next. "Their

plan is to arrest opposition bloggers, that is our fear," Adeyanju Deji, a member of the People's Democratic Party, said to AFP. "We have come to the conclusion that this government doesn't like to be criticised."

EFCC spokesman Wilson Uwujaren said that Usman had been released on bail and that his court date will be announced in the coming days.

Buhari has bolstered the EFCC in his bid to stamp out fraud in Africa's largest economy, but critics accuse him of using his war against corruption as a way to silence political foes.

Source: [AFP](#).

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