

PUBLIC

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UA 12/09 Enforced disappearance/ fear of torture or other ill-treatment

CHAD Issa Palkoubou (m), teacher

Issa Palkoubou, a teacher in the Chadian capital, Ndjamen, has not been seen since his abduction on 3 September 2008. Amnesty International believes that he may still be alive, and could be in the custody of Chadian security forces at an unknown location. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment, and of being killed.

Issa Palkoubou, who teaches English at the American Language Center (*Centre américain de Langues*) in N'djamena, was abducted from the Center by three men in plain clothes, who forced him into a car. When security personnel at the Center challenged the abductors, the men said nothing and refused to show any identification.

Human rights defenders and relatives continue to inquire about his fate but have come up against obstruction and intimidation from members of the Chadian security forces. One of Issa Palkoubou's family members was seriously intimidated when he went a few days after the arrest to the National Security Agency (*Agence Nationale de Sécurité, ANS*) offices in N'djamena to inquire about Issa Palkoubou's whereabouts. Issa Palkoubou was allegedly seen, very sick, in an ANS detention facility in N'djamena at the beginning of December 2008. His family members sent a letter to the Minister of Human Rights in December 2008, copying some local human rights organizations, relating the situation and asking the Minister to intervene. The Minister did not reply to the letter.

It is not clear why Issa Palkoubou was targeted. His enforced disappearance fits a pattern of similar cases in Chad, where people who are not known to be members of any particular political party are abducted.

For example Harun Mahamat, Sultan of the Dar Tama department in eastern Chad, was abducted in November 2007 in the eastern town of Guéréda, along with seven other men of the Tama ethnic group. Harun Mahamat was found to be held by Chadian security forces in N'djamena and released on 3 May 2008, over six months after his abduction.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Scores of people in Chad, arrested by the security forces, have been the victims of enforced disappearance. On 3 February 2008, Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh, leader of a coalition of political opposition groups, was arrested at his home in N'Djamena by members of the Chadian security forces. He has not been seen since. In April 2006, after an assault by armed groups on N'Djamena, at least 13 high ranking army officers were arrested and they have not been heard from since. Three months earlier, on 30 November 2007, eight people were arrested in the eastern town of Guéréda. The whereabouts of seven of the eight men remain unknown.

Enforced disappearance appears to be a method used by Chadian security forces in order to spread fear among the population and to intimidate perceived or real political opponents. It is common for people detained in security forces facilities in Chad to be victims of torture and other forms of ill-treatments.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French, English or your own language:

- urging the Chadian authorities to investigate the enforced disappearance of Issa Palkoubou, for the results to be made public and those responsible to be brought to justice;
- calling for his whereabouts to be revealed immediately;
- if he is found to be held by the security forces, calling for his immediate release if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to trial in accordance with international fair trial standards;
- urging them to ensure that Issa Palkoubou is given adequate medical attention and immediate access to his lawyers and relatives in case he is being detained by the authorities.

APPEALS TO:

President

Son excellence Idriss Deby Itno
Présidence de la République
BP 74

N'Djamena, Tchad

Fax: +2352514501

Email: presidence@tchad.td

Salutation: Monsieur le président/Dear President Deby

Minister of justice

Jean-Bawoyeu Alingué
BP 1122

N'Djamena, Tchad

Fax: +235252 21 39

Salutation: Monsieur le ministre/Dear Minister

Minister of human rights

Abderaman Djasnabaille
BP 426

N'Djamena

Tchad

Fax: + 235 252 21 39

Email: justice@intnet.td

Salutation: Monsieur le ministre/Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Chad accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 March 2009.