

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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*This is a limited action - please organize up to TEN appeals per section. Please also bring this action to the attention of the refugee coordinator in your section.*

UA 412/92 Fear of forcible return (refoulement)

22 December 1992

**CAMEROON: Four Chadian nationals in exile:**  
**Abass Kotti, former Minister of Defence**  
**Bichara Digui**  
**Bichara Idriss Hagar**  
**Mahamat Souleymane**

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Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Abass Kotti, an exiled former Chadian government minister, and three of his supporters, also Chadian nationals, named above. They were reportedly arrested on 17 December 1992 in Maroua, the capital of Far-North Province, Cameroon, following the discovery of a cache of arms close to the border with Chad. They are believed to be currently detained without charge at the gendarmerie headquarters in Maroua. Amnesty International fears that the Cameroonian authorities may forcibly return them to Chad, where they would be at risk of "disappearance", torture or extrajudicial execution.

In June 1992 Abbas Kotti, the then Chadian Minister of Defence, left the government following a rift between himself and President Idriss Déby. He and some 3,000 of his supporters from the Zaghawa ethnic group were then involved in fighting with loyalist troops in western Chad in an area near to Lake Chad and Chad's border with Cameroon. Abbas Kotti's supporters were defeated and he subsequently fled to Cameroon. Forty-two people arrested by the Chadian authorities following the departure of Abbas Kotti have since "disappeared" in detention.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The Chadian authorities have previously detained and tortured suspected government opponents forcibly returned to Chad from Nigeria on three occasions since October 1991. Notably, in February 1992, more than 200 Chadian nationals were forcibly returned from the capital of Nigeria's Borno State, Maiduguri, to N'Djamena, where they were held in detention. Many of them were blindfolded and tortured during the transfer and the subsequent interrogation in Chad by members of Chad's security forces. They were kept in cramped cells and starved; at least three of them died as a result of torture or extrajudicial execution (see UA 139/92, AFR 20/08/92, 5 May 1992).

Amnesty International is concerned that Chadian nationals who are in danger of being forcibly returned to Chad from other neighbouring countries may also be subjected to similar human rights violations.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in French or English, or in your own language:**

- expressing concern at reports that four Chadian nationals, including former Minister of Defence, Abass Kotti, arrested on 17 December 1992 in Maroua, the capital of

Far-North Province, Cameroon, may face forcible return to Chad where they would be at risk of "disappearance", torture or extrajudicial execution;

- expressing concern that they may suffer the same fate as that of some 300 Chadian nationals who were repatriated from Nigeria in February 1992. They were imprisoned in secret by the Chadian security services; many of them were tortured and some were extrajudicially executed;

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- urging the Cameroonian authorities to ensure that no one who might be at risk of "disappearance", torture or extrajudicial execution in Chad is forcibly returned there;

- calling on the Cameroonian authorities to release them if they are not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought to trial in accordance with international standards of fair trial.

**APPEALS TO**

1) President:

Son Excellence Monsieur Paul Biya  
Président de la République  
Palais de l'Unité  
Yaoundé, Cameroon

**Salutation: Monsieur le Président  
de la République /  
Dear President**

**Telegrams: President Biya, Yaounde, Cameroon**

**Faxes: + 237 221699**

**Telexes: 8207 PRESID KN (Secretariat général)  
8595 PRESID B KN (Cabinet civil)**

2) Minister of Foreign Affairs:

Ferdinand Léopold Oyono  
Ministre de l'Administration  
territoriale  
Ministère de l'Administration territoriale  
1000 Yaoundé 4, Cameroon

**Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre /  
Dear Minister**

**Telegrams: Minister de l'Administration territoriale Oyono, Yaounde, Cameroon**

3) Governor of Far-North Province:

Gouverneur de la Province  
de l'Extrême Nord  
Palais de Gouvernance  
4300 Maroua, Cameroon

**Salutation: Monsieur le Gouverneur /  
Dear Govenor**

**Telegrams: Monsieur le Gouverneur, Maroua, Cameroon**

**COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:**

1) Minister of Interior:

Gilbert Andzé Tsoungui  
Vice-Premier Ministre  
et Ministre de l'Administration  
territoriale  
Ministère de l'Administration  
territoriale  
1000 Yaoundé 4, Cameroon

2) Human Rights Organization:

Dr Solomon Nfor Gwei  
President  
National Commission on Human Rights and  
Freedoms  
PO Box 287  
Yaoundé, Cameroon

and the following newspapers:

Cameroon Tribune  
BP 1218, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Cameroon Post  
BP 1981, Yaoundé, Cameroon

Cameroon Outlook  
BP 124, Limbé, Cameroon

La Gazette  
BP 5485, Douala, Cameroon

Dikalo  
BP 12656, Douala, Cameroon

and to diplomatic representatives of Cameroon accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 2 February 1993.