

# CHAD

## @Extrajudicial executions in Doba

On 17 August 1992 government soldiers in the southern town of Doba went through the town, deliberately shooting and killing unarmed men, women and children. On that day and over the following few days, soldiers killed more than 100 people. Two months later, the government has done nothing to redress the situation, to carry out a formal inquiry or to bring those responsible for extrajudicial executions to justice. Instead, the authorities have concentrated on disputing the number of victims, in an evident attempt to trivialize the incident. No soldiers have been reprimanded and the commander of the Doba garrison remains unchanged.

Doba is the capital of Logone Oriental province (*préfecture* in French), a small town between the southern capital, Sarh, and Moundou in the southwest. It is located in an agricultural area and by August, in the middle of the rainy season, much of the farmland surrounding it is covered in water, making communication with neighbouring towns difficult.

Since February 1992 the surrounding countryside has been affected by the activities of an insurgent group known as the *Comité de sursaut national pour la paix et la démocratie* (CSNPD), Committee for the Revitalization of Peace and Democracy, led by Lieutenant Kette Nodji Moïse, an army officer who took his supporters into the bush after failing in an attempt to overthrow or destabilize Chad's government in February 1992.

By mid-August 1992 negotiations were in progress to bring the CSNPD's insurgency to an end. However, after soldiers garrisoned in Doba shot at a vehicle which soldiers said failed to stop at a road-block on the edge of the town on 16 August, killing two people, CSNPD insurgents launched an attack on the town's garrison early on the morning of Monday 17 August. According to some reports, CSNPD insurgents who had reached a peace agreement with government officials were driving into the town openly when shooting broke out. The ensuing fighting lasted between one and three hours, leaving some 20 of those involved dead. By 9am the fighting was over with the CSNPD insurgents fleeing into the town or surrounding fields.

For the rest of Monday 17 August soldiers went on the rampage, shooting people indiscriminately, both in their houses, in the streets and in the fields. The authorities tried to justify the killing subsequently on the grounds that rebels had tried to hide among the civilian population, making it impossible for soldiers to distinguish between unarmed civilians and insurgents who might at any moment attack them.

In reality, however, it is clear that soldiers deliberately shot at people who were not armed and posed no danger. Four school children registered at the local *lycée* (secondary school, "Lycée Dickoa Garandi") were killed, with two more dying from their injuries subsequently. A young six-year-old girl, Mingue Ouadaye, was reportedly wounded, while her grandmother was killed trying to save an eight-year-old girl with a bullet wound in her left arm. Other children were also wounded.

Killings occurred all over the town, particularly in the Dobaye, Mbaye and Ndoh quarters. Vehicles arriving in the town were also attacked without warning by soldiers, with some passengers killed. As the day went on, there were also killings in the surrounding rice fields.

The soldiers' violence was not aimed just at people, but also at their houses and property. Shops and businesses were looted by soldiers, who carried away their booty to their barracks.

Reports reaching Amnesty International make it clear that more than 100 unarmed civilians were shot down and killed, victims of extrajudicial execution, in this incident. However, there has been considerable controversy over the exact number and the government has exploited the controversy to shift the focus off the responsibility of its own armed forces for extrajudicial executions and into the realm of propaganda.

An initial report on the massacre by the *Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'homme* (LTDH), Chadian League of Human Rights, a non-governmental organization formed in 1991, suggested a few days after the killings that between 200 and 300 people had been killed. The League later revised its estimate to 150. In its first public comment, the government claimed that only five or six people had been killed. By the end of August, Prime Minister Joseph Yodoyman suggested that just 25 civilians had died. A month later the number had climbed further and government officials told Amnesty International representatives visiting Chad's capital, N'Djamena, in September 1992 that 34 or 35 people had died. However, other government officials referred to figures of

50 or 60. Furthermore, government officials attributed the figure of 35 to the local Red Cross Society in Doba when in reality the Red Cross had dealt with many more bodies. In some cases soldiers reportedly refused relatives access to dead bodies to bury them, while in others, relatives were evidently scared to reclaim them. Estimating the exact number of victims was made even more difficult as young men began to flee the town to avoid being accused by soldiers of being insurgents.

Despite the controversy over the number of people killed, the military authorities did not order or carry out any formal inquiry into the killings to establish either the number of people killed or circumstances in which unarmed people had been killed. On the contrary, the military authorities' attitude appears to have been one of complete complacency, with no concern at all demonstrated for innocent civilian victims. The military authorities in N'Djamena were evidently told early on in the morning of 17 August about the fighting in Doba, but were satisfied once they received a radio message that "things were under control".

Despite the scale of the killings and publicity surrounding them, no public inquiry was announced. In September 1992 a government commission, led by the Secretary of State for the Interior, Brahim Mahamat Tidei, visited Doba, apparently with the principal objective of negotiating a peace accord with the CNSPD. It was announced at the end of September 1992 that one had been reached. A senior official of the Ministry of Justice told Amnesty International representatives that the local Procurator (*Procureur de la République*, in charge of carrying out criminal investigations and prosecutions) in Doba had been ordered to carry out an inquiry for the judiciary, but it was unclear by the end of September 1992 whether this inquiry had been begun or when it might be completed.

Responsibility for the tragic loss of life in Doba lies at various levels. The CNSPD was responsible for launching an attack, possibly by ruse, and creating the conditions in which there would be confusion between rebels and civilians. Furthermore, several government or security officials who had been negotiating with the CNSPD on 16 August were subsequently kept captive by the insurgents, possibly as hostages. Amnesty International opposes the taking of hostages, that is holding people prisoner, or threatening them with torture or death, in order to make demands on others.

The killings in Doba on 17 August were not the first time that CNSPD attacks had been followed by reprisals against civilians. In February 1992, a CNSPD attack on a police station in N'Djamena was followed by deliberate and arbitrary killings of southern civilians in various districts of the capital, leaving dozens dead. Government troops also carried out reprisal attacks against soldiers originating from southern Chad who were camped at military barracks in Boudouloum town, 30 kilometres south of N'Djamena. The southern soldiers who were awaiting demobilization from the Chadian National Army were at the time poorly armed and outnumbered. It was reported that about 50 of them were executed extrajudicially by soldiers loyal to the government.

It is also not the first time that the civilians in Doba have been executed extrajudicially by government troops. Between 1982 and 1984 government forces were responsible for hundreds of extrajudicial executions and "disappearances" in southern Chad, also in reprisal for the activities of armed opposition groups. Responsibility for the killing in August 1992 clearly lies with the soldiers garrisoned in Doba. In particular, however, it seems that certain branches of the armed forces, notably the *Garde républicaine* (Republican Guard), bore greater responsibility than others, and even resorted to killing other soldiers. The Republican Guard is composed mainly of combatants from the east and northeast of Chad, notably from the Zaghawa ethnic group who were fighting alongside Chad's President, Idriss Déby, before he took power in December 1990. Virtually all the soldiers they killed on 17 August appear, like other civilian victims in Doba, to have come from the south of Chad.

Amnesty International is calling on the government of Chad and on all commanders of armed units to restrain the troops under their command in order to put an end to extrajudicial executions in Chad. Before the killings in Doba, several hundred other extrajudicial executions had already been reported in Chad during 1992.

Please send appeals, if possible in French or Arabic, urging the Chadian authorities to:

- Initiate an independent and impartial public inquiry into the killings and to prevent such killings from recurring in future;
- Suspend immediately from active service, officers commanding the Doba garrison, until they have been cleared of responsibility for the killing of unarmed civilians;
- Bring soldiers suspected of carrying out extrajudicial executions to justice;
- Issue and ensure adherence to orders to all armed units to treat non-combatants humanely and refrain in all cases from killing or injuring such people.

Please send appeals to the President and one other of the government officials indicated below:

**Général Idriss DEBY** **Monsieur Youssouf TOGOIMI**  
Président de la République **Ministre de la Justice et Garde**  
Présidence de la République des Sceaux  
N'DJAMENA **Ministère de la Justice**  
République du Tchad **N'DJAMENA**  
République du Tchad

**Monsieur Loum Hinaïssou** **Monsieur Djimbaye Nestor**  
**LAINA** **NADJIDOU MDE**  
Ministre délégué auprès de la **Ministre chargé des Affaires**  
Présidence de la République, **humanitaires**  
chargé de la Défense nationale **Présidence de la République**  
**Ministère de la Défense nationale** **N'DJAMENA**  
**N'DJAMENA** **République du Tchad**  
**République du Tchad**

Copies to:

**Ligue Tchadienne des Droits** **N'Djamena Hebdo**  
**de l'Homme (LTDH)** **Rédacteur-en-Chef**  
BP 203711 Avenue Charles de Gaulle  
N'Djamena BP 760  
République du Tchad **N'Djamena**  
République du Tchad