

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST RELEASED BUT CHARGES REMAIN

Jean-Paul Noel Abdi, the president of the Djiboutian League of Human Rights (la Ligue djiboutienne des droits humains, LDDH), was granted provisional liberty on 21 February 2011 on health grounds. He remains charged with participation in an insurrectional movement after he investigated and reported on arrests following recent student protests in the Republic of Djibouti, in the Horn of Africa.

Jean-Paul Noel has been detained in Gabode Prison since 9 February. Lawyers acting on his behalf submitted a request for his release to the judge presiding over the case on 19 February. They reported that his health was deteriorating rapidly because of problems with his heart and his diabetes.

Jean-Paul Noel Abdi was charged with participation in an insurrectional movement ("participation a un mouvement insurrectionnel") under articles 145 and 146.4 of the Penal Code. On 5 and 6 February, Jean-Paul Noël Abdi recorded and shared information about alleged arbitrary arrests following student protests in Djibouti City. He had also tried to visit the students in detention.

Students protested on 5 February, against a low pass rate this year and the quality of the education system. Local sources believe that the protests have become increasingly political. The international media has reported civil unrest and low-level violence, including rock throwing and looting.

Presidential elections are scheduled for April 2011. Opposition parties refused to take part in the 2005 and 2008 elections because their demands for changes in the electoral process were not met.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in French, English or your own language:

- welcoming the provisional release of human rights defender, Jean-Paul Noël Abdi, on health grounds.
- expressing grave concern that Jean-Paul Noël Abdi is still charged with participation in an insurrectional movement, apparently for investigating and reporting on arbitrary arrests following the recent student protests;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that all Djiboutian human rights defenders can work freely and independently and with the full protection of the state.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 APRIL 2011 TO:

President of the Republic

Ismail Omar Guelleh
Palais Présidentiel
BP 6
Djibouti Ville
République de Djibouti
Fax: 00 253 35 50 49

Salutation: Your Excellency / Dear President

Minister of Justice

Mohamed Barkat Abdillahi
Ministre de la Justice,
BP 12
Djibouti Ville
République de Djibouti
Fax: 00 253 35 54 20

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Public Prosecutor
Maki Omar Abdoukader
Fax: 00 253 35 69 90

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 28/11. Further information: <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR23/001/2011/en>

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST ARRESTED IN DJIBOUTI

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The political space in Djibouti is dominated by the People's Rally for Progress (RFP) headed by President Ismail Omar Guelleh, who won a second term in 2005. In 2010, the Djiboutian parliament voted in favour of amending the constitution to allow the President to run for a third term.

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