

AI Index: PRE01/560/2013
24 October 2013

Chad: Repressive tactics against government critics must come to an end

Killings, enforced disappearances, illegal detention and arbitrary arrests of critics of the government are far too frequent in Chad and must come to an end, says Amnesty International in a report released today.

“People are dying in detention, held incommunicado and arbitrarily arrested left, right and centre, all in the name of ‘protecting national security’,” says Christian Mukosa, Amnesty International’s Chad researcher. “The government is doing everything it can to silence anyone who dares to criticise them.”

The report, [Chad: In the name of security?](#) released today, provides evidence about how the government brutally represses any form of criticism and restricts the freedom of expression in the country.

Hundreds of people - including opposition MPs, journalists and academics – are illegally detained in Chad, many held without charge in deplorable conditions.

The Hissène Habré regime in the 1980s was notorious for the repressive tactics used to silence anyone opposing the government. Promises to end human rights violations were made by President Idriss Deby Itno when he came to power in 1990 but the situation continues to deteriorate.

An alleged attempted coup in May 2013 was suppressed when security forces indiscriminately opened fire on a group of reportedly unarmed people, they believed to be involved. Between three-eight people were shot dead.

Security forces then arrested and detained many of the injured and refused them immediate access to medical treatment.

Following the attempted coup, a number of political opponents including Mahamat Saleh Makki, member of parliament and president of the Unity and Reconstruction Party, were detained.

They were later charged with “conspiracy, endangering the constitutional order and complicity of assassination.”

Around 30 are still in detention. The whereabouts of many of them is unknown, despite repeated requests for information from family members and human rights organizations, including Amnesty International.

Mahamat Saleh Makki was detained for four months, only allowed to see his family three days

after his arrest and was initially denied access to a lawyer.

“The police and security forces show no respect whatsoever for human rights and enjoy total impunity,” says Christian Mukosa.

A National Commission of Inquiry was set up in 2008 to investigate human rights violations committed during and in the aftermath of a February 2008 attack by armed opposition groups in the capital, N’Djamena.

The Commission’s report found the Chadian Government responsible for the arbitrary arrest, illegal detention and enforced disappearance of a number of individuals, including opposition leader Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh whose whereabouts remain unknown to date.

Amnesty International is calling for prompt, thorough, independent and impartial investigations into all allegations of torture and ill-treatment and for those responsible to be brought to justice.

The organization is also calling for the release of all prisoners detained without charge or for them to be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

“Serious human rights violations take place on a daily basis in Chad where the systematic violation of human rights has been going on for far too long. The Chadian authorities are violating their own constitution, as well as national and international law. The abuses being carried out by the government have to stop and the perpetrators urgently need to be prosecuted,” said Christian Mukosa.

On 17 October Chad was elected as a non permanent member of the UN Security Council for the next two years starting in January 2014. “The Chadian authorities have to take this opportunity to improve the protection, promotion and respect of the human rights situation in the country,” added Christian Mukosa.