

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVISTS RELEASED BUT CHARGES STILL PENDING

On 29 and 30 September, a Niamey Court senior judge granted the provisional release of activists, **Maikoul Zodi, Moudi Moussa and Halidou Mounkaila**. However, the fabricated charges against them – which are in connection to their demands for accountability in a protest in March 2020– are still pending. They therefore remain at risk of wrongful conviction and arbitrary detention. Amnesty International urges the Nigerien authorities to immediately drop all charges against them.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

M. Marou Amadou
Minister of Justice
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Your Excellency,

I welcome the news that activists, **Maikoul Zodi, Halidou Mounkaila and Moudi Moussa** were provisionally released from detention on 29 and 30 September by a Niamey Court. However, I remain concerned that the charges against them and other civil society leaders- including **Moussa Tchangari, Habibou Mounkaila and Karim Tanko** who were also arbitrarily detained and have since been released - are still pending.

All six activists were arbitrarily detained and charged for unauthorized gathering, complicity in damaging public property, arson and manslaughter, following a protest that they organised in Niamey, Niger's capital, on 15 March, demanding an investigation into the allegations of misuse of funds by the Ministry of Defence.

Amnesty International believes the charges against the activists have been fabricated to undermine the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of assembly and expression, and their demands for accountability.

In light of the above, I urge you to:

- **End the prosecution of the six activists and ensure the charges against them are immediately dropped.**
- **Ensure an independent, impartial, thorough and effective investigation into the deaths during the demonstration on 15 March is carried out, to bring the suspected perpetrators to justice, with due regard for the right to a fair trial.**
- **Protect the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and expression in Niger in this pre-electoral period.**
- **Put an end to harassment, intimidation and attacks against members of civil society.**

Yours sincerely

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

On 13 March, the Niger authorities published a statement from the Council of Ministers concerning measures being taken to combat the spread of COVID-19, including a ban on all gatherings likely to attract more than 1,000 people. A demonstration was already planned to take place on 15 March in Niamey and other cities by civil society organisations to demand an investigation into the allegations of misuse of funds revealed by an audit of the Ministry of Defence. Despite the ban, the organisers went ahead with the demonstrations. In the early hours of 15 March, security forces blocked all the roads leading to the planned venue for the protest, the 'Place de la Concertation' in Niamey. At least three individuals died when the demonstration was violently broken up by security forces using tear gas. Significant damage was recorded as several shops were set on fire near the Tagabati market. The 6 activists were arrested and detained. Karim Tanko was released provisionally on 19 April, and Moussa Tchangari and Habibou Soumaila on 30 April.

The human rights situation in Niger will be reviewed at the next session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (13 November-3 December 2020) and at the 38th session of the Universal Periodic Review of the UN Human Rights Council (3 May-14 May 2021).

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: FRENCH

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 4 December 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Moudi Moussa, Maikoul Zodi, Mounkaila Halidou Moussa Tchangari, Habibou Soumaila and Karim Tanko (He/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AFR43/2931/2020/en/