

URGENT ACTION

FOUR CHADIAN ACTIVISTS ON TRIAL AWAIT VERDICT

The trial against four Chadian activists began on 7 April. The Public Prosecutor's office has requested that they be sentenced to six months in prison. A verdict is expected on 14 April. The four are prisoners of conscience.

Activists **Mahamat Nour Ibedou** and **Younous Mahadjir**, spokespersons of the civil society organisations platform 'Ça suffit', **Nadjo Kaina Palmer**, coordinator of the youth movement 'Iyina' and **Celine Narmadji**, spokesperson of the civil society movement 'Trop c'est trop!' are on trial for 'incitement to an unarmed gathering', 'disturbing public order' and 'disobeying a lawful order'. Their trial was scheduled to start on 31 March, but was postponed to 7 April.

During the trial session on 7 April, the Public Prosecutor in the closing statement requested for a six months prison term for the four activists. The verdict is expected on 14 April. The court denied a bail request mainly motivated by the deteriorating health of Mahamat Nour Ibedou, Younous Mahadjir and Celine Narmadji.

Mahamat Nour Ibedou and Younous Mahadjir were arrested on 21 March and 22 March respectively; Nadjo Kaina Palmer was arrested on 22 March and Celine Narmadji was arrested on 23 March. All four were arrested after reporting to the judicial police headquarters for questioning and transferred to the Amsinene prison in N'Djamena on 24 March.

The four activists were planning to organise peaceful public demonstrations which would have taken place on 22 March and 29 March. The demonstrations were being organised to protest against the current President Idriss Deby's bid for re-election for a fifth mandate.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on Chadian authorities to immediately release Mahamat Nour Ibedou, Younous Mahadjir, Nadjo Kaina Palmer and Celine Narmadji and drop all charges against them;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending their release, the four activists are not subjected to torture or other ill-treatment and have access to a lawyer of their choice, to family visits and to all basic necessities including healthcare;
- Urging the authorities to end all forms of harassment against all human rights activists and defenders and political activists in Chad;
- Urging them to protect and ensure the right to freedom of expression and assembly for all in conformity with Chad's international human rights obligations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 23 MAY 2016 TO:

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Dr. Ateib Idriss Halawlaw
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
N'Djamena, Chad

Salutation: Dear Minister

Public Prosecutor

Alghassim Khamis
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Tribunal de Grande Instance
P.O. Box: 426
N'Djamena, Chad
Email: alghassimk21@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Public Prosecutor

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security and Immigration
Ahmat Mahamat Bachir
Ministry of Public Security and Immigration
N'Djamena, Chad
Email: bachiram62@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 68/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr20/3737/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

14 candidates are running for president in Chad in the presidential elections. The electoral campaign started on 20 March and the first round of the elections was held on 10 April.

Amongst the candidates is the current Chadian President Idriss Deby who has been in power for 25 years after toppling Hissene Habre in 1990 and is seeking a fifth term in office. In 2005, the Chad Constitution was amended and the two-term limit on presidential tenure was eliminated.

For security reasons, on 19 March, the Chadian Minister of Public Security and Immigration, Ahmat Mahamat Bachir, publicly announced that all public demonstrations not part of the election campaigns were forbidden.

On 30 March, a request for a peaceful demonstration organised by civil society organisations to call on authorities to release the four activists was denied by the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration.

On 4 April, a day before another planned demonstration, Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam, one of the leaders of 'Ça suffit', was arrested for having written messages for a demonstration organised by civil society organisations on 5 April demanding that the authorities to release the four activists. He was detained at the judicial police headquarters until 8 April, when he was transferred to the Amsinene prison. The charges against him are 'incitement to an unarmed gathering', 'disturbing public order' and 'disobeying a lawful order'. Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam's trial is scheduled to start on 11 April.

On 5 April, two groups of protestors decided to peacefully demonstrate and call on the Chadian authorities to release the five activists. The venue of the rally of the first group was invaded by security forces who fired tear gas to disperse the protestors. The second group of protestors who were planning to demonstrate peacefully in front of the USA embassy was intercepted by the police. It was reported that at least two protestors were arrested and at least one was injured.

During the four activists' trial, there was heavy presence of security forces in and outside the Court building.

Hundreds of people showed up at the court grounds in support for the four on trial. Due to space limitation, many of them stayed outside the court. They were singing and shouting slogans calling on the authorities to release the four activists. Many of the supporters were wearing t-shirts with images of the four activists and/or holding placards with slogans.

When taking the activists back to prison, supporters refused to give passage to the prison car. Security forces fired live rounds and tear gas to disperse them, triggering a panic in which at least two people were injured.

Amnesty international published two press releases calling for the immediate release of the four activists - <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2016/03/tchad-les-autorites-doivent-liberer-deux-activistes-arrets-pour-avoir-prepare-une-manifestation-pacifique/> and <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2016/04/tchad-le-maintien-en-detention-de-quatre-activistes-est-une-injustice/>

Name: Mahamat Nour Ibedou (m), Younous Mahadjir (m), Nadjou Kaina Palmer (m) and Celine Narmadji (f)
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 68/16 Index: AFR 20/3809/2016 Issue Date: 11 April 2016