

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS HELD WITHOUT CHARGE

Two human rights defenders, Moussa Tchangari and Nouhou Azirka, were arrested on 18 and 24 May respectively after making public statements on human rights violations during the state of emergency in the Diffa region in Niger and the poor working conditions of security forces. Both are being detained without charge in Niamey, Niger.

Moussa Tchangari, Secretary General of the Alternative Citizen Spaces (Alternatives Espaces Citoyens, AEC) was arrested on 18 May while bringing food to eight village chiefs of the Diffa region who had been arrested on 15 May for “failure to cooperate with the authorities in the fight against Boko Haram”. Moussa Tchangari’s arrest is also linked to two AEC reports, criticising the government for failing to take appropriate measures to protect human rights in view of recent Boko Haram attacks in the region and also after a state of emergency was declared in the Diffa region on Tuesday 10 February to bolster Niger’s response to ongoing Boko Haram attacks.

Moussa Tchangari has been allowed access to a lawyer, but not family visits while in detention at the anti-terrorist brigade’s station. He staged a hunger strike after anti-terrorist brigade officers refused to give him food brought by his wife on 24 May. The next day he was then allowed to have food brought for him. His detention was renewed after 120 hours. Niger’s anti-terrorism law allows for one renewal of detention without charge after 120 hours. The Minister of Internal Affairs, in a statement to Agence France-Presse (AFP), accused Moussa Tchangari of “criminal conspiracy in connection with the terrorist enterprise Boko Haram.” Moussa Tchangari has yet to be charged.

Nouhou Azirka, President of the Movement for the Promotion of Responsible Citizenship (Mouvement Pour la Promotion de la Citoyenneté Responsable, MPCR) was arrested on 24 May and detained in police custody for “offenses against national defence”. His arrest came after a television interview in which he stated that soldiers in the Diffa region had complained of poor working conditions. He had been questioned twice before by judicial police over the interview. Nouhou Azirka is yet to be formally charged and has not been allowed family visits while in detention at the judicial police station in Niamey.

Please write immediately in French, English or your own language:

- Calling on Niger authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Moussa Tchangari and Nouhou Azirka who have been detained solely for exercising their right to freedom of expression and freedom of association;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that the two are not subjected to any form of torture or ill-treatment while in detention; and allow them visits from their families and access to lawyers.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JULY 2015 TO:

President of the Republic

M. Issoufou Mahamadou
Palais Présidentiel
Boulevard de la République,
Niamey, Niger
Tel: +227 20 72 24 72,
Fax: + 227 20 73 34 30
Email: pneniger@gmail.com

**Salutation: Your Excellency,
President of the Republic of Niger**

Minister of Justice, Human Rights and

Attorney General
M. Marou Amadou
BP 466
Niamey, Niger
Tel: +227 08 00 11 11
Fax: +227 20 72 37 77

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Prime Minister
M. Brigi Rafini
Cabinet du Premier Ministre BP 893
Niamey, Niger
Tel: + 227 20 72 26 99
Fax: + 227 20 73 58 59

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.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Alternative Citizen Spaces (Alternatives Espaces Citoyens, AEC) published two reports following allegations of human rights violations against civilians after a state of emergency was declared in Diffa region and during the period of evacuation of civilians from islands on Lake Chad after Boko Haram attacks. In April, Boko Haram attacked an island situated in Lake Chad, both civilians and soldiers were killed as a result of this attack. Nigerien authorities ordered inhabitants of the islands to move to other places as the attacks had resulted in instability in the area.

In one of the reports, AEC characterises the government's measures after it declared a state of emergency, as harmful to local populations, restricting not only the movement of people, in violation of article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), but also prohibiting the import of food products, therefore depriving people access to adequate food supplies, in violation of article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). Following Boko Haram attacks on 25 April on an island on Lake Chad, another report by the same organisation also criticised authorities for not organising an appropriate reception for displaced people at the N'guigmi camp in Niger, highlighting the lack of water and scarce food supply at the camp.

AEC has since been asked by the Governor of Diffa to seek permission from the Minister of Internal Affairs to continue its activities in the region of Diffa.

Name: Moussa Tchangari and Nouhou Azirka

Gender m/f: m

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