

24 February 1999

Further information on UA 166/98 (AFR 20/06/98, 29 May 1998) and follow-up (AFR 20/07/98, 19 June 1998, AFR 20/08/98, 22 July 1998 and AFR 20/13/98, 29 October 1998)) - Fear for safety/Medical concern/Legal concern/Prisoner of conscience

**CHAD**Ngarléjy Yorongar le Moïban - leader and sole parliamentary representative of the opposition party, *Front d'action pour la République-Fédération* (FAR), Action front for the Republic-Federation

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Prisoner of conscience Ngarléjy Yorongar le Moïban was released on 5 February 1999, after eight months in detention.

His release was announced in a presidential decree, which cited 'humanitarian reasons', issued after a meeting between President Idriss Déby and local political representatives from Ngarléjy Yorongar's East Logone region in southwestern Chad. During the meeting, President Déby said to the representatives: '*Je vous le libère, mais sachez que j'ai le moyen de le faire taire. Je vous le libère, à vous de le faire taire.*' ('I am releasing him for you, but remember that I have the means to keep him quiet. I am releasing him for you, so it is up to you to keep him quiet.')

Following his release, Ngarléjy Yorongar sent the following message of thanks to members of Amnesty International who campaigned on his behalf:

*'Vos actions conjuguées avec la chaîne de solidarité des militantes et militants de part le monde ont abouti à ma libération... Je ne saurais vous remercier... Sans cette chaîne de solidarité, je serai encore aujourd'hui dans cette tristement célèbre prison... je vous encourage à continuer à oeuvrer pour les prisonniers qui, de part le monde, continuent à moisir dans les geôles des dictateurs... mes salutations à tous les militantes et militants de l'Amnesty International qui m'ont écrit pour m'encourager à tenir bon. Je puis vous dire que ces lettres ont été confisquées par la police politique et c'est à ma sortie que j'ai pu lire celles en provenance des Etats-Unis qui ont échappé à ses mailles... mes remerciements les plus chaleureux et ma gratitude la plus sincère.'*

('Your actions, combined with the chain of solidarity of activists all over the world, have led to my release... I do not know how to thank you... Without this chain of solidarity, I would still be in that regrettably well-known prison... I encourage you to continue working on behalf of the prisoners who, all over the world, are rotting in the jails of dictators... my greetings to all the Amnesty International activists who wrote to me, encouraging me to hold out. I can tell you that your letters were confiscated by the security police, and it is only since my release that I have been able to read some letters sent from the United States, which slipped through the net... my warmest thanks and sincerest gratitude.')

In July 1998 Ngarléjy Yorongar le Moïban was convicted of defaming President Idriss Déby and the President of the National Assembly, Wadal Abdelkader Kamougué (note corrected spelling). In an interview published in the Chadian newspaper *L'Observateur* in July 1997, he had accused Wadal Abdelkader Kamougué of financing his election campaign with money from the French oil company Elf. He was sentenced to three years in prison and a fine of 500,000 CFA (US \$900). The N'Djaména Court of Appeal upheld his sentence on 24 December 1998, but reduced by half the

sentences of Madame Sy Koumbo Singa Gali, the director of *L'Observateur*, and Polycarpe Togamissi, the journalist who conducted the interview, to one-year suspended prison sentences and fines of 500,000 CFA each.

**No further action is required by the Urgent Action Network. Many thanks to all who sent appeals.**