

PUBLIC

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"Disappearance"/Fear of torture

CHAD

Mounoudji Fidel (m), aged 28 or 29, human rights defender
Abdel Hamit (m), imam
Noueuse Fadoul (m), high school student, aged 14 or 15
Hissein Hassan (m), shopkeeper
Adam Mahamat (m), shopkeeper
Ibrahim Ahmat (m), shopkeeper
At least six others

At least 12 people, including the six named above, one of whom is aged 14 or 15, have been arbitrarily detained in the capital, N'Djamena, since an attack on the city on 13 and 14 April by an armed opposition group. The authorities have not disclosed where they are held, and relatives and human rights defenders have been turned away from prisons where some are thought to be in custody. They are at risk of torture or "disappearance".

The attack on N'Djamena was led by the *Front Uni pour le changement* (FUC), United Front for Change, a coalition of armed opposition groups that want to overthrow the government of President Idriss Deby. The attack resulted in dozens of people killed as well as at least some 200 wounded.

Human rights defender Mounoudji Fidel was arrested by people in military uniform on 25 April at around 7pm. He is a member of the leading Chadian human rights organisation the *Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'homme* (LTDH), Chadian Human Rights League. No one has seen him since his arrest, and despite attempts by the LTDH to locate him in the official places of detention, his whereabouts are unknown. Amnesty International believes he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his work in defence of human rights.

Abdel Hamit, the imam (Muslim cleric) of a mosque in N'Djamena was arrested on 16 April. He was presented on television and accused of having hosted members of armed opposition groups. He is thought to be held at the *Présidence de la République*, office of the President.

Men in uniform thought to be police arrested Hissein Hassan, Adam Mahamat, Ibrahim Ahmat and a relative on 18 April at the family shop they run, in front of other members of their family. They appear to have been arrested because a relative of theirs had been arrested, accused of being a member of the FUC. No one has seen them since their arrest.

High school student Noueuse Fadoul, who is aged 14 or 15, was arrested at his home in N'Djamena at around 10 pm on 25 April by members of the *Agence Nationale de Sécurité* (ANS), National Security Agency, who had apparently come for his elder brother because of his alleged links with armed opposition groups. No one has seen him since his arrest.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

For several months, the Chadian government has been coming under attack from armed opposition groups mostly based in the east of the country and in Darfur, in neighbouring Sudan, allegedly backed by the Sudanese government. As a result, relations between the two countries have deteriorated and Chad has now broken its diplomatic ties with Sudan.

These opposition groups formed the FUC umbrella coalition in December. In March, the Chadian authorities claimed that they had foiled a coup attempt by a group of soldiers linked to the FUC who planned to shoot down President Deby's plane. More than 100 soldiers were arrested and are still held incommunicado.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French, English or your own language:

- urging the authorities to release human rights defender Mounoudji Fidel immediately and unconditionally, as he is a prisoner of conscience;
- expressing concern that at least 12 people, including those named (naming them) are detained incommunicado for their supposed involvement in the 13 and 14 April attack on N'djamena, and urging the authorities to reveal where they are detained;
- seeking assurances that they are not being tortured or ill-treated, and urging the authorities to give them regular access to their families, lawyers and any medical attention they may require;
- urging the authorities to release them immediately, unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- if they are to be charged, asking for details of the charges against them and when they are to be put on trial.

APPEALS TO:

President

Son Excellence Général Idriss Déby
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 74 N'Djaména, République du Tchad

Fax: +235 51 45 01

+235 52 44 73

Salutation: Monsieur le Président

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Ngarta BAIHOROUM
Ministre de la Justice, Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice,
N'Djamena, République du Tchad

Fax: + 235 52 21 39 (via foreign ministry)

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre

Minister of Defence

Monsieur Bichara Issa DJADALLAH
Ministre de la Défense nationale et de la Réinsertion
Ministère de la Défense nationale
N'Djamena, République du Tchad

Fax: +235 51 91 22 (via foreign ministry)

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Chad accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 June 2006.