

UA 166/98 Fear for safety

29 May 1998

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

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Ngarlégy Yorongar le Moiban, a prominent political opponent, due to intimidatory behaviour by the *Agence Nationale de Sécurité (ANS)*, National Security Agency, who are keeping a continual presence outside his home. Amnesty International fears he may be at risk of ill-treatment by the ANS.

On 26 May 1998, the representatives of the National Assembly of Chad voted to lift the parliamentary immunity of Ngarlégy Yorongar. Since then, there have been members of the ANS continuously around his house.

The decision to lift the parliamentary immunity of Ngarlégy Yorongar follows a charge of defamation brought against him by Wadal Addelkader Kamougué, president of the National Assembly and parliamentary representative of the *Union pour le renouveau et la démocratie (URD)*, Union for Renewal and Democracy. In an interview with a Chadian newspaper *l'Observateur*, published on 9 July 1997, Ngarlégy Yorongar accused Wadal Addelkader Kamougué of accepting money (reportedly 15 million French francs) from the oil company Elf, to finance his election campaign to become president of the National Assembly. Elf has a large operation in Chad and will soon begin the construction of a controversial 1,050km pipeline through Chad and Cameroon.

Ngarlégy Yorongar has a high public profile in Chad as a major critic of both the government and the president of the Republic. As a result, he has been the victim of politically motivated arrests on several previous occasions, including in March 1994 when he was arrested and detained for five days. In June 1996 he reportedly received threats in the run-up to the presidential elections in which he was a candidate. Amnesty International took up his case through the Urgent Action network in July 1996, when he was arrested and detained without charge for 13 days and was reportedly ill-treated (see Extra 105/96, AFR 20/02/96, 9 July 1996 and follow-ups).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Critics of the Chadian government, in particular human rights activists and journalists, continue to be the victims of death threats and ill-treatment by the Chadian security forces, including the ANS. The human rights situation in Chad has been extremely fragile since violent clashes on 30 October 1997 between the security forces and the *Forces Armées pour la République Fédérale (FARF)*, an armed opposition group, in Moundou, southern Chad. At least 80 people were killed and others arrested and tortured following the clashes. There are frequent reports of killings, arbitrary arrests, torture and other human rights abuses.

On 25 September 1997, Sosthène Ngargoune, a prominent Chadian journalist, was severely beaten and threatened by members of the security forces who he was interviewing. Human rights activists Dobian Assingar and Julien Beassemnda have also received threats - Julien Beassemnda's house was ransacked by the security forces in early November 1997.

In March 1998, following the massacre of over 100 people, mainly civilians (apparently in reprisal for the activities of the FARF), the government imposed a temporary ban on the activities of several human rights organisations, severely restricting freedom of expression in Chad.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in French or your own language:

- expressing concern that Ngarlégy Yorongar is being intimidated by, and may be at risk of human rights violations by, members of the ANS keeping up a presence outside his house;
- reminding the Chadian authorities that other government opponents, including human rights activists and journalists, have recently been threatened and beaten by members of the security forces;
- seeking assurances that the government will take immediate steps to ensure the physical safety and security of Ngarlégy Yorongar;
- urging the Chadian authorities to ensure that freedom of expression in Chad is restored and that human rights violations are not committed by government forces.

APPEALS TO:

Président Idriss DEBY
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 74 N'DJAMENA, République du Tchad
Telegrams: President Déby, N'Djaména, Chad
Faxes: + 235 51 45 01
Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

Monsieur Mahamat Nimir HAMAJTA
Ministre de la Défense nationale et de la Réinsertion
Ministère de la Défense nationale
N'Djaména, Chad
Telegrams: Ministre Défense, N'Djaména, Chad
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Monsieur Abdramane SALLAH
Ministre de l'Intérieur, de la Sécurité et de la Décentralisation
Ministère de l'Intérieur
N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad
Telegrams: Ministre Intérieur, N'Djaména, Chad
Faxes: + 235 52 58 85
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Procureur de la République, Palais de Justice, Moundou, Chad
Le Rédacteur en chef, N'Djaména-Hebdo, BP 760, N'DJAMENA, Chad

and 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 30 June 1998