

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FACING BOGUS CHARGES

On 24 January Baradine Berdei Targuio, a Chadian human rights defender, was arrested at his home in N'Djamena by masked and armed individuals. Amnesty International was informed that he was being kept at the National Security Agency (ANS), but nobody was able to see him. Although the Minister of Justice declared in February that Baradine Berdei Targuio's arrest was legal and under the supervision of a prosecutor for "subversive activities on social media", it wasn't until 21 August that he was eventually presented to a prosecutor and an investigative judge. He was charged with breach of national security, illegal possession of weapons, assault and battery. Amnesty International is concerned that Baradine Berdei Targuio is being detained and prosecuted in connection with his work as a human rights defender.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

Excellency Minister Djimet Arabi, Minister of Justice

Ministère de la Justice

Ndjamena

Tchad

Email: arabidji@gmail.com

Your Excellency,

I am writing in concern of Baradine Berdei Targuio, the President of the Chadian Human Rights Organization.

On 24 January, he was arrested by masked and armed men at his home and, according to several sources, taken to the National Security Agency (ANS) where he was not seen or heard from by anyone for almost seven months. Arrest and detention in this manner constitutes an enforced disappearance.

On 22 January, two days before his arrest, he posted on Facebook about the health of the President saying that he "might be seriously ill and hospitalized in France", and had previously addressed an open letter to the President about the human rights situation in the northern region of Tibesti, Chad, in the context of the state of emergency in November 2018.

After almost seven months in arbitrary and incommunicado detention, Baradine Berdei Targuio was presented to a prosecutor and an investigative judge on 21 August and on 24 August charged with breach of national security, illegal possession of weapons, assault and battery.

Amnesty International is concerned that the charges brought against Baradine Berdei Targuio are bogus and in connection with his work as a human rights defender. We note that they relate to actions that allegedly took place during his arrest in January, yet have not been brought by the authorities until August – despite other allegations being made in the interim concerning online expression, there has never before been an allegation of violent conduct.

In this regard, I ask you to:

- *Immediately and unconditionally release Baradine Berdei Targuio and drop the charges against him.*
- *In the meantime, ensure that he is protected from torture and other ill-treatment in detention and has regular access to his family and lawyers.*
- *Ensure a prompt, thorough, independent, effective and transparent investigation is carried out into all allegations of human rights violations committed against him, including enforced disappearance, and for suspected perpetrators to be identified and brought to justice in fair trials.*

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since 2017, Amnesty International has repeatedly documented and campaigned on cases of arbitrary arrest and detention of activists and human rights defenders in Chad and has made to the authorities recommendations to protect human rights defenders and journalists, including to ensure that they can operate in a safe environment and free from arbitrary arrest. Amnesty International has also called on the authorities to refrain from using the criminal justice system to target and harass human rights defenders and journalists for exercising their rights to freedom of expression, peaceful assembly and association. For more information see Amnesty International's 2017 report on *'The Rising Cost of Dissent in Chad'*. During its last Universal Periodic Review in 2018, Chad accepted the recommendations to develop and adopt a law to recognize and protect human rights defenders: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr20/0046/2019/en/>.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 23 OCTOBER 2020

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Baradine Berdei Targuio (He/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr20/1767/2020/en/>