

URGENT ACTION

HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED

On 1 December, Daouda Diallo, secretary general of the Coalition Against Impunity and Community Stigmatization, was abducted by security forces in civilian clothes while he was renewing his passport at the passport office in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso. He was taken to an unknown location. Three days later, a picture showing him in military clothes and armed circulated on social media. In early November, Daouda Diallo, along with several other civil society and media figures, including activists, journalists, and unionists, was conscripted by the government. An April 2023 decree on general mobilisation to fight armed groups is used by national authorities to sanction and silence civil society members and human rights defenders who publicly criticize the government. The authorities should stop enforced disappearances, immediately release Daouda Diallo if he is still detained, end using targeted conscription to repress critics and allow anyone to contest conscription orders before independent judicial authorities.

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

Captain Ibrahim Traoré
President of Burkina Faso
03 BP 7027 Ouagadougou 03, Burkina Faso
Email: compaore415@hotmail.com

Dear President,

On 1 December, security forces in civilian clothes abducted Daouda Diallo, a human rights defender and Secretary General of the Coalition Against Impunity and Community Stigmatization (CISC), from the passport office in Ouagadougou. According to CISC, Daouda Diallo was forced into a vehicle and driven to an unknown location. No information has been disclosed regarding his fate and whereabouts. Pending his release, Daouda Diallo's family must be immediately notified about his fate and wellbeing.

In early November, Daouda Diallo, along with several civil society and media figures, was conscripted, allegedly to participate security operations, but Amnesty International believes that the conscription was used by the sanction supporters of a sit-in demonstration, planned for 30 October 2023 by several civil society organizations to commemorate the 2014 overthrow of the Blaise Compaoré regime. The sit-in was later cancelled following pressure from the government. A few days later, many leaders of the organizations that were planning the demonstration, were informed that they were on a list of public figures due to be conscripted.

The list of public figures due to be conscripted was never made public and Daouda Diallo never received a notification of his conscription. He contested the legal basis for the conscription through a public release while expressing his right to dissent. On 20 November, an administrative court in Ouagadougou refused to suspend the conscription order of four individuals (journalist Issiaka Lingani, Gabin Korbéogo, secretary-general of the Organisation Démocratique de la Jeunesse, and two members of the Balai Citoyen movement, Rasmene Zinaba and Bassirou Badjo) while allowing the contestation of the conscription's objectives to be examined by another court. On 6 December, Ouagadougou administrative court ruled that the conscriptions orders were not legal and ordered their suspension. The court also ordered the army to immediately refrain from carrying out those conscriptions' orders.

In light of the above, I call on your government to stop enforced disappearances and release immediately Daouda Diallo if he is still detained. I urge your government to be transparent about the conscription process, cease from using the April 2023 decree as a threat to independent voices in Burkina Faso and to clarify the ways citizens can contest the legal basis of their conscription.

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr Daouda Diallo is the Secretary General of the Coalition against Impunity and Community Stigmatization (CISC). CISC emerged out of the Yirgou killings of January 2019. At least 43 people were killed during attacks by a 'self-defence' armed group called Koglweogo that has often operated alongside the country's military. The killings sparked a humanitarian crisis in Burkina Faso, driving thousands of survivors to Barsalogho and Kaya for protection. The CISC emerged first as an informal group to respond to the needs of the survivors and calling for justice, before becoming more established.

In 2022, Daouda Diallo was awarded the Martin Ennals Award for human rights defenders.

In April 2023, a decree "on general mobilization and safeguarding" granted the authorities the "right to request people, goods and services, the right to control and allocate supply resources and, to this end, to impose the necessary constraints on individuals or corporate bodies; the right to summon for the sake of national defence, any individual (...)". All Burkinabè aged 18 years and above can now be conscripted if they are physically deemed fit and if the need is expressed by competent authorities.

The decree for national mobilization and safeguarding is being used to repress and silence human rights defenders and journalists and other civil society activists, despite the provisions for contestation when goods and services are requisitioned, or when individuals are mobilized for military service (Article 13).

This repressive tactic against critics have already raised serious concerns prior to the adoption of the decree, regarding forced enrolment into the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland (VDPs), an armed self-defence group in Burkina Faso created by the government to fight armed groups.

Just a month before its promulgation, Boukaré Ouedraogo, president of the "Appel de Kaya", a civil society organization, was forcibly enrolled as a VDP by the military, despite his visual impairment. A week prior, he had criticized the government for the lack of drinkable water in Kaya, a city in Burkina Faso, and for their poor response to the security situation. In a speech during a visit to Kaya in March 2023, President Traoré alluded to Boukaré Ouedraogo's situation, blamed him for exposing a "vulnerable point" that caused a loss of military lives during attacks, and threatened on the same occasion all Civil Society Organisations members with being forced to join the VDPs in case of public communication seen to be critical of the authorities.

In September 2023, Dr. Arouna Louré, an anaesthetist and former member of the National Transitional Council, (an interim legislative body established pursuant to the Transitional Charter) was also conscripted for one month and taken from the hospital he was serving to be deployed. A few days later, photos of him with shaven head and military uniform were published on social media; deploying civilians without their consent and taking pictures of them to disseminate on social media is a tactic that was also used in the case of Boukaré Ouedraogo, who was recorded on video extolling the military regime.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 2 February 2024

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

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: Daouda Diallo (he/him)