

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 18/92 Legal/ill-treatment concern

14 January 1992

CHAD: Adoum Moussa Seif, former Minister of Information
Ahmed Mahamat
Ahmed Lamine Ali, Director General of Air Chad
Ahmed Seid, employee of the Customs Union of Central African States
(UDEAC)
Ali Abass Selchi
Assileck Outhman Ali, student
Bichara Digui, businessman
Bichara Idriss Hagggar, director of taxes
Djamaldine
Mahamat Outhman, student
Mahamat Seid Ali Fithy
Mouli Seid, former Chadian Ambassador to Sudan
Orozi Fedeibou, former director of Air Chad
Ramadan Waïdo
Senoussi Ali Hagggar, employee of Air Chad

These 15 people were arrested between 8 and 11 January 1992 in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena, by members of the security police known as the Centre de recherche et de coordination des renseignements (CRCR), Centre for Investigation and Coordination of Intelligence. The authorities have not confirmed the identities of those arrested nor revealed their places of detention. Members of the CRCR are reported to have used firearms to break into the premises of some of those arrested and at least three people are reported to have been shot dead in what seem to have been extrajudicial executions.

The authorities have claimed that those arrested are supporters either of rebels who carried out a violent attack on the Lake Chad region in the west of the country at the beginning of January or of an alleged coup attempt which took place on 13 October 1991. The rebels who clashed with government forces at the beginning of January 1992 were reportedly supporters of former President Hissein Habré who was overthrown in December 1990. However, independent sources in N'Djamena have suggested that most of those arrested are members of the opposition Rassemblement pour la démocratie et le progrès (RDP), Rally for Democracy and Progress, detained because of their peaceful opposition to the government.

Amnesty International is concerned that the 15 appear to be detained outside the framework of the law. No arrest warrants appear to have been issued to authorise their arrests and they have not been referred to the Procuracy or brought to court. Similarly many people were arrested for political reasons in October 1991, but none of them are known to have been referred to a judicial authority, charged with any offence or brought to trial. Amnesty International is concerned that those arrested in January 1992 may also be held indefinitely without charge or trial. There is also concern that the 15 may be subjected to torture. Other prisoners are reported to have been tortured and some to have died in custody since October 1991.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since it came to power in December 1990, the Chadian Government has been faced with continuing tensions within the army between members of different ethnic groups. Most recently violent clashes broke out in October 1991 between members of the Hadjerai ethnic group and those belonging to other ethnic groups. Maldom Bada Abbas, the then Vice-President of the ruling party and Minister of Interior and Security, and several dozen others, mostly Hadjerai, were arrested and accused of plotting to overthrow President Idriss Deby, though no evidence

was produced and they have not been brought to trial. Independent observers in Chad have claimed that there was no coup attempt, but that soldiers loyal to the government invented it to justify the arrest or killing of Hadjerais who had taken part in the overthrow of Hissein Habré.

At the beginning of January 1992 rebels believed to be supporters of former President Habré clashed with government soldiers in the Lake Chad region in the west of the country. Most of those arrested after the rebel attack are former officials in Hissein Habré's government. Many former officials in the government and security forces, including the defunct security police known as the Direction de la documentation et de la sécurité (DDS), Directorate for Documentation and Security, which was responsible for gross human rights violations during President Habré's rule, are reported to have been integrated in the new government's institutions such as the CRCR security police. Reports from Chad suggest that, as in October 1991, the recent arrests may be yet another move by President Deby's supporters to get rid of even peaceful government opponents by claiming they are linked to violent opponents of the government.

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Although the authorities who took power in December 1990 criticised the massive abuses of human rights committed by the previous government, they took no action to introduce safeguards or procedures which would prevent similar abuses. In particular, no action has been reported to end the illegal practice by the security police and military, of detaining prisoners incommunicado on an indefinite basis, without referring them to the judicial authorities or courts, as required by law.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/airmail letters in FRENCH, if possible:

- expressing concern at reports that the 15 people named above (naming some) were arrested, mostly at night, by members of the CRCR security police who did not have arrest warrants;
- expressing concern that most of those arrested are members of the RDP political party and that they appear to have been targeted for arrest because of their peaceful opposition to the government and in the absence of substantial evidence that they have committed any offences;
- seeking assurances that those still held are not being ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to make public the identities and places of detention of all those arrested, and to end their incommunicado detention to ensure that they receive visits from their relatives and legal counsel and that they have access to adequate medical care;
- expressing concern that, as in the past, detainees arrested by the security police are being detained by the police without being referred to an independent judicial authority (French: parquet), a violation of their human rights and of Chad's own laws;
- urging the authorities to ensure that any of those arrested solely because they belong to a non-violent political party or are related to other government opponents are released without delay, and that others against whom criminal charges are to be brought are referred to the Procuracy with a view to bringing them promptly to trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) President:

Son Excellence Général Idriss DEBY
Président de la République du Tchad
Présidence de la République
N'DJAMENA, République du Tchad

Telegrams: President Deby, N'Djamena, Chad

Telexes: 5201 PRESIREP KD or 5307 PRESIREP KD

Faxes: + 235 51 4501

Salutation: Monsieur le Président de la République / Dear President

2) Prime Minister:

Monsieur Jean Alingue BAWOYEU
Premier Ministre

Présidence de la République
N'DJAMENA, République du Tchad
Telegrams: Premier Ministre Bawoyeu, N'Djamena, Chad
Telexes: 5201 PRESIREP KD or 5307 PRESIREP KD
Faxes: + 235 51 4501
Salutation: Monsieur le Premier Ministre / Dear Prime Minister

3) Minister of Justice:
Monsieur Youssouf TOGOIMI
Ministre de la Justice et Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
N'DJAMENA, République du Tchad
Telegrams: Ministre Justice, N'Djamena, Chad
Telexes: c/o 5328 MINAFFET KD
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

4. Minister of the Interior:
Monsieur Ahmat Hassaballah SOUBIANE
Ministre de l'Intérieur et de la Sécurité
Ministère de l'Intérieur
N'DJAMENA, République du Tchad
Telegrams: Ministre Intérieur, N'Djamena, Chad
Telexes: c/o 5328 MINAFFET KD
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

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COPIES TO:

1) Minister of Defence:
Nadjita BEASSOUMAL
Ministre de la Defense
Ministère de la Defense
N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad
Telegrams: Ministre Defense, N'Djamena, Chad
Telexes: c/o 5201 PRESIREP KD or 5307 PRESIREP KD
Faxes: c/o + 235 51 4501
Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

2) Editor of N'Djamena-Hebdo:
Le Rédacteur-en-chef
N'Djamena-Hebdo
11 Avenue Charles de Gaulle
BP 760
N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad

3) Human Rights Organizations:
Monsieur Djondang TCHAKNONE
Président
Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'Homme
BP 2037, N'DJAMENA
République du Tchad

and to diplomatic representatives of Chad in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 24 February 1992.