

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST ARRESTED, RISKS TORTURE

Journalist Eric Topona, Secretary General of the Union of Chadian Journalists (UJT) was arrested on 6 May and transferred to Am Sinene prison in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena, where detention conditions are life-threatening.

Eric Topona, a journalist for Chad's national broadcaster, the National Radio and Television Broadcast Office (*Office National de Radiodiffusion et Télévision du Tchad*, ONRTV) was arrested in the morning of 6 May, when he presented himself at the N'Djamena Magistrate's Court in response to a summons issued by an investigative judge (*juge d'instruction*). He was later charged with "endangering constitutional order", detained under a warrant and transferred to Am Sinene detention centre in the suburbs of N'Djamena.

According to his lawyer, Eric Topona was summoned to testify in a defamation case involving Jean Laoukolé. A writer and humanitarian worker, Jean Laoukolé was transferred to the Am Sinene detention centre on 25 March after being detained incommunicado for three days. He was charged with defamation following accusations that he had written "false accusations" against a group of people who might have lodged a complaint against him with the police (see UA 73/13, AFR 20/002/2013, 23 March 2013).

Eric Topona has been harassed, intimidated and threatened by various government officials especially in the last year.

Please write immediately in French, Arabic, English or your own language:

- Expressing concern that Eric Topona may be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression, in which case he should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- urging the authorities to respect Eric Topona's right to a fair trial, including the right not to be subjected to unnecessary pre-trial detention;
- pointing out that the deplorable conditions in Am Sinene detention centre, where Eric Topona is detained, amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 19 JUNE 2013 TO:

President
Monsieur Idriss Deby
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 74, N'Djamena
Email, via website:
http://www.presidencetchad.org/nous_ecrire.php
Salutation: Dear President Deby

Minister of Human Rights
Amina Kodjiyana
Ministre des Droits de l'Homme
Ministère des Droits de l'Homme
BP 169, N'Djamena
Email: droittchad@yahoo.fr
Salutation: Dear Minister

Minister of Justice
Maitre Jean-Bernard Padaré
Ministre de la Justice,
Ministère de la Justice
BP 426, N'Djamena
Email: jpadare@yahoo.fr
Salutation: Dear Minister

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Eric Topona was arrested and detained during a tense time in Chad after information on an attempted coup emerged on 1 May 2013. According to various sources, at least eight people have been killed in unclear circumstances. The Chadian authorities have since arrested a number of people including a member of parliament, former army officers and several civilians. The houses of some opposition leaders, including that of parliament opposition leader Saleh Kebzabo, have apparently been searched by security officers. Some other opposition leaders such as Ngarlejoy Yorongar were summoned to the police or the prosecutor's office.

Name: Eric Topona

Gender m/f: m

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