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@Amnesty international calls for a full inquiry into army killings in the south in 1993

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of killings by the *Armée nationale tchadienne* (ANT), Chadian National Army, being carried out in the south of Chad in the area around Goré town. The organization is concerned that, despite a visit to the area in March 1993 by government officials from the capital, members of ANT, in particular those described as members of the *Garde républicaine* (Republican Guard) are committing serious human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, with absolute impunity. Amnesty International is urging the government to order an immediate halt to the illegal killings, to ask an independent commission of inquiry to visit the area and collect facts about what has happened, and to bring anyone found responsible for violations of human rights to justice.

Since January 1993, reports of arbitrary killings and "disappearances" as well as the burning of granaries and houses by government soldiers in the Moyen-Chari and Logone-oriental provinces (préfectures) in southern Chad have been widespread. The recent violence, which echoes events in Doba town on 17 August 1992 (described by Amnesty International in a report entitled *Chad: Extrajudicial executions in Doba*, October 1992, AI Index AFR 20/12/92), apparently began after an unsuccessful attempt by the army to capture the leaders of an armed opposition group, the *Comité de sursaut national pour la paix et la démocratie* (CSNPD), Committee for the Revitalisation of Peace and Democracy, led by Lieutenant Moïse Ketté, a breakaway senior official of the ruling *Mouvement patriotique de salut* (MPS), Patriotic Movement for Salvation, and former army officer. CNSPD insurgents have been carrying out a campaign of violence against the government since February 1992.

Recent reports suggest that many CSNPD insurgents have fled from southern Chad and are now located across the border in the north of neighbouring Central African Republic. Nevertheless, killings by government soldiers were continuing in March 1993. Reports received by Amnesty International indicate that many of the killings have been carried out as "reprisal" attacks on civilians suspected of having contacts with the CSNPD or harbouring CSNPD sympathizers, or identified with the CSNPD simply because they are southerners, (in contrast to the Republican Guard, which is mainly composed of soldiers from the northeast). The victims reportedly included women and children. A government minister, reacting to criticism of the army's activities in the region, claimed that it was "difficult for soldiers to distinguish between rebels and local people."

According to the *Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'homme* (LTDH), Chadian League for Human Rights, the spate of killings began around the 21 January 1993, when at least 45 civilians, including **Mathieu Ndotoloum**, a Protestant pastor, were killed by members of the Republican Guard in Goré town in the far south of the country and surrounding villages. In February, four ANT soldiers and another local pastor, **Jacques Diedje**, were arrested in the vicinity of Doba, apparently because they were suspected of having links with the CSNPD. Jacques Diedje was reportedly subjected to severe beating and died on 22 February as a result of his injuries. The whereabouts of the four soldiers who were arrested, **Lieutenant Sérayohim DOYO, Sous-Officer Hassane KABO, Sergent-Chef Ndouba NJADIMADJE and Sous-Lieutenant Joachim NOJHORKEM MBAILAOU**, is unknown. The Republican Guard was also said to have burned to the ground several villages in the area and on 23 February eye-witnesses saw four unarmed men gunned down by soldiers near Goré. The four were all from the Peul ethnic group (also known as Fula or Fulani) who are generally engaged in cattle herding in the area. In this same incident, four Peul women were taken away by soldiers and subsequently "disappeared."

The violence against civilian targets and the arrest of civilians suspected of links with the CSNPD has continued in March 1993. A statement issued by the CSNPD in neighbouring Central African Republic suggested that on 16 March government soldiers "opened fire with heavy weaponry and rockets" on the village of Bebou killing 26 people. As a result of these killings, many people have fled the area and some 15,000 refugees from southern Chad are now reported to be in Central African Republic. On 25 March, a nurse named **Moussa Ben Moussa**, accused of having links with the CSNPD, was arrested in Moundou town and then taken to N'Djaména where he is now believed to be held incommunicado within the Presidential complex, at the President's palace, without being referred to the normal judicial authorities, and there are grave fears for his safety.

The killings in southern Chad have occurred while a National Conference to discuss the country's political future has been going on in N'Djaména, the Chadian capital. The National Conference, which opened on 15 January 1993, has brought together over 800 delegates from a variety of social and political backgrounds including representatives from the CSNPD and other armed opposition groups and has given human rights much coverage on its agenda. In addition to reading out publicly an appeal to delegates by Amnesty International (*Appeal to Chad's National Conference and political leaders for action to protect human rights*, January 1993, AI Index AFR 20/01/93), the presidium of the conference announced on 13 March the creation of seven working groups, one of which was to discuss human rights.

On 14 February 1993, after protests by both the National Conference and the international community against the killings in the south, Education Minister Fidel Mounzar (who was later to be elected Prime Minister of a transitional parliament by the

National Conference on 6 April) admitted before the conference that government soldiers were responsible for arbitrary killings in the Logone-Oriental and Moyen-Chari provinces and ordered a government commission of inquiry to investigate. The findings which were announced before the National Conference on 7 March by the Minister of Public Works, concluded that the violence was perpetrated by "fighting between pastoral and agricultural communities." This failed to convince the Chairman of the National Conference, Adoum Maurice Helbongo, who demanded that a new delegation composed jointly of government officials and National Conference representatives be sent to the south to investigate. His request was rejected by President Idriss Déby without explanation.

The deliberate killing of prisoners, civilians and anyone else who is *hors de combat*, is a grave violation of humanitarian law, as well as the most fundamental of human rights. Such killings have been the subject of numerous condemnations by the international community, with the result that in 1989 the United Nations adopted a series of **Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions** (resolution 1989/65 of the Economic and Social Council). These principles indicate in particular that "there shall be thorough, prompt and impartial investigations of all suspected cases of extra-legal, arbitrary and summary executions."

Amnesty International is calling on President Déby, the transitional government of Chad and on all commanders of armed units to restrain troops under their command that all killings of prisoners or other killings of unarmed villagers are a punishable offence and prohibited in all circumstances. In order to establish the full facts about the killings and responsibility for them, the government should immediately initiate a full inquiry, under an independent investigative body composed of individuals known in Chad for their impartiality, integrity and competence, into recent killings in southern Chad, bringing all those believed to be responsible for committing human rights violations to justice.

Please send appeals, if possible in French or Arabic, urging the Chadian authorities to:

- Take immediate steps to stop the continuing violence by soldiers against unarmed villagers and townspeople in the south of Chad.
- Immediately initiate an independent and impartial public inquiry into the killing;
- Bring soldiers suspected of carrying out extrajudicial executions to justice;
- Issue and ensure adherence to orders to all armed units to treat non-combatants humanely and refrain in all cases from killing or injuring such people.

Please send appeals to the President and the Prime Minister indicated below:

Colonel Idriss DEBY **Monsieur Fidel MOUNGAR**
Président de la République Premier Ministre
Présidence de la République N'DJAMENA
N'DJAMENA République du Tchad
République du Tchad
FAX: 235 51 4501 FAX: 235 51 4501
Telex: 5201 PRESIREP KD Telex: 5201 PRESIREP KD

Copies to:

Monsieur LE COMMANDANT
Comregion No. 2
Armée nationale tchadienne
MOUNDOU
République du Tchad.

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BP 203711 Avenue Charles de Gaulle
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