

PUBLIC

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Further Information on UA 259/07 (AFR 43/003/2007, 12 October 2007) **Prisoner of conscience**

NIGER Ibrahim Manzo Diallo (m), journalist

On 31 October, newspaper editor Ibrahim Manzo Diallo was formally charged with criminal association (*association de malfaiteurs*) as he is accused of links with the *Mouvement des Nigériens pour la justice* (MNJ), Niger People's Movement for Justice, an armed opposition movement, formed of members of the Tuareg ethnic community. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful and legitimate activities as a journalist.

Ibrahim Manzo Diallo was arrested on 9 October and transferred to military custody in the Agadez region of northern Niger, where he was detained arbitrarily for three weeks. After being charged, he was sent to Agadez prison, where his family and other contacts are allowed to visit him. His lawyer, who is based in the capital, Niamey, is expected to visit him in the next few days.

Until June 2007, Ibrahim Manzo Diallo was the editor of the privately-owned twice-monthly newspaper *Air Info*, based in Agadez. The authorities banned *Air Info* for alleged "incitement to violence", following a series of attacks on the army launched by the MNJ. At the end of October, another *Air Info* journalist, Daouda Yacouba, was detained in Agadez for six days before being released without charge or trial.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In February 2007, the MNJ launched attacks against the army, killing about 40 soldiers and taking about another 70 soldiers hostage, many of whom were later released. As a result on 24 August 2007, the President of Niger, Mamadou Tandja, declared on a three-month state of emergency in the northern region of Agadez. A number of civilians suspected of supporting the MNJ were arrested, some of whom are still in custody. They may be prisoners of conscience, arrested solely for exercising their right to peaceful freedom of expression.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in French, Arabic or your own language:

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Ibrahim Manzo Diallo;
- stating that Amnesty International believes that he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for his peaceful and legitimate activities as a journalist;
- expressing concern about the pattern of intimidation and arrest of journalists in Niger and urging the authorities to respect the freedom of the press, as set out in international standards including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the African Charter of Human and Peoples' Rights;
- expressing concern about the powers given to the military and the police in Agadez under the emergency legislation in the region.

APPEALS TO:

Mamadou Tandja
Président de la République du Niger
La Présidence
Niamey
NIGER

Fax: + 227 20 72 27 07

Salutation: Monsieur le Président / Dear President

Djida Hamadou
Ministre de la Défense
Ministère de la Défense
Niamey
NIGER

Fax: + 227 20 72 40 78

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

Albade Aboufa
Ministre de l'Intérieur
Ministère de l'Intérieur
Niamey
NIGER

Fax: + 227 20 72 21 76

Salutation: Monsieur le Ministre / Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Niger accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 19 December 2007.