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Chad: Suffering continues one year after fighting

As the first anniversary of the last fighting between government and armed opposition forces in N'Djaména approaches, Amnesty International can reveal that serious human rights violations perpetrated by the security forces are continuing with no one being held accountable.

“A year after the conflict, members of the security forces who carried out a regime of murder, torture and enforced disappearance of suspected government opponents have not been brought to justice, fuelling an already pervasive problem of impunity,” said Tawanda Hondora, Amnesty International’s Africa Deputy Programme Director.

The organization called on the Chadian government to initiate criminal investigations into allegations of human rights abuses -- including war crimes and crimes against humanity – and to bring those responsible to justice.

Amnesty International released a report in December 2008, *Double misfortune -- Deepening human rights crisis in Chad*, which revealed the extent of the continuing violations.

“Enforced disappearance appears to be a method used by Chadian security forces to spread fear among the population and intimidate perceived or real political opponents,” said Tawanda Hondora. “Scores of people arrested by the security forces simply disappeared. Their whereabouts remain unknown.”

On 3 September Issa Palkoubou, an English teacher at the American Language Centre in N'Djaména, was abducted from the centre by three men in plain clothes and forced into a car. He hasn't been seen or heard from since. The whereabouts of Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh, a leading opposition politician who was one of many arrested last February, also remains unknown.

“The Chadian government must disclose the whereabouts of those who have disappeared. They must also initiate criminal proceedings against members of their security forces and others who may have committed human rights violations,” said Tawanda Hondora.

Background

On 2 and 3 February 2008, armed opposition groups mounted an offensive in the heavily populated areas of the capital city of Chad, N'Djaména. Government forces responded by bombing areas in N'Djaména where they believed the opposition forces were attacking from. Hundreds of civilians were killed or injured and more than 50,000 fled the capital to seek refuge in neighbouring Cameroon. The government of Chad regained control of N'Djaména and opposition forces retreated to Sudan.

Late in the afternoon of 3 February, the security forces entered the homes of several leaders of the unarmed

opposition. They arrested the former Chadian president, Lol Mahamat Choa, Member of Parliament, Ngalegy Yorongar and the leader of the Party for Freedom and Development, Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh. Lol Mahamat Choa was placed in detention for 25 days before being released, Ngalegy Yorongar was detained for 19 days and Ibni Oumar Mahamat Saleh disappeared and has not been heard of since.

On 15 March 2009, MINURCAT, a multi-dimensional UN Mission in Chad, will take over from EUFOR, the European Union-led military force. According to its new mandate, the UN mission will “contribute to the monitoring and to the promotion and protection of human rights in Chad, with particular attention to sexual and gender-based violence, and to recommend action to the competent authorities, with a view to fighting impunity”.

For more information, please see the Amnesty International report: [Double Misfortune -- Deepening Human Rights Crisis in Chad.](#)