

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALIST DETAINED FOR SOCIAL MEDIA POST

Journalist Mamane Kaka Touda is currently being detained at Niamey Civil Prison, Niamey, Niger, having published a post on social media regarding a suspected case of COVID-19 infection in the Emergency Department of the Niamey Reference Hospital on 5 March. He was arrested at home on the same day and charged with “disseminating data tending to disturb public order”.

TAKE ACTION: WRITE AN APPEAL IN YOUR OWN WORDS OR USE THIS MODEL LETTER

President of the Republic of Niger

M. Issoufou Mahamadou

Palais Présidentiel

Boulevard de la République,

Niamey, Niger

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Salutation: Your Excellency

Dear Excellency,

I am writing to express my concern that journalist Mamane Kaka Touda has been detained since 5 March at Niamey Civil Prison, after he published a post on social media regarding a suspected case of COVID-19 infection in Niamey Reference Hospital. He was arrested at home on the same day and charged with "disseminating data tending to disturb public order".

Since 9 March, prison guards have refused to take the food delivered by Mamane Kaka Touda's aunt and give it to him because his aunt does not have a communication permit. The permit is only given to close relatives, including spouses, parents and siblings.

I am deeply concerned that Mamane Kaka Touda's rights have been violated. The authorities must protect journalists, whistle blowers, activists and human rights defenders, in accordance with the country's international obligations to protect human rights.

In light of the above, I urge you to ensure that:

- *Charges against Mamane Kaka Touda are dropped and that he is immediately and unconditionally released;*
- *Pending his release, he has prompt, regular and unrestricted access to a lawyer of his choice and access to his family without delay;*
- *The right to freedom of expression is fully respected, protected and promoted.*

Yours sincerely,

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Mamane Kaka Touda, journalist and human rights defender, and member of the NGO "Alternative Espaces Citoyens", is detained in the Civil Prison of Niamey, the capital of Niger.

He published posts on social media alerting on a suspected case of COVID-19 infection on 5 March. In a statement released the same day, the hospital said there were no cases of COVID-19 in its departments. A spokesperson for the Ministry of Health subsequently confirmed the suspected case mentioned by Mamane Kaka Touda, explaining that an Italian national had indeed been admitted there "as a precaution" before leaving the hospital, the tests being negative.

Niger has not yet identified any case of the COVID-19 infection in the country.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: [French]

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: [24 April 2020]

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: [Mamane Kaka Touda] (he/his)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: N/A