

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED CHADIAN YOUTH ACTIVIST ALLEGES TORTURE

Alain Didah Kemba, spokesperson of the Chadian youth movement IYINA, was arrested on 19 February for allegedly attempting to burn a tire on the street. He is being detained at the Police Headquarters without charge. Alain has reported that he was beaten on his legs and the soles of his feet during an interrogation and his lawyer says he can barely stand on his feet as a result.

Alain Didah Kemba, spokesperson of the Chadian youth movement IYINA (*we are tired* in local Arabic), was arrested early in the morning on 19 February by a police officer. Later that day, the police spokesperson told the media that Alain had been arrested by a police commander while he was about to burn a tire with gasoline he was holding in a bottle. His lawyer was also told the same thing when he went to the Police Headquarters to ask about his client. He was not able to see his client. On the same day, the Public Prosecutor told Amnesty International that he knew nothing about Alain's arrest or his whereabouts.

On 20 February, Alain's lawyer attempted to visit him twice at the Police Headquarters, but the police denied having him in custody. Later, his friends and family were able to confirm that Alain was detained at the Police Headquarters where he remains to date. It was only after this confirmation that Alain's lawyer was able to see him. The lawyer told Amnesty International that his client could barely stand on his feet as Alain said that he was beaten on his legs and the soles of his feet by police officers during an interrogation.

Alain has yet to be charged and has denied ever being in possession of a bottle of gasoline at the time of his arrest. He says he was on his normal morning run and the police arrested him as he was running past a tire.

Over the past two years human rights defenders and government critics have been repeatedly repressed in Chad as dissent has been growing over President Deby's fifth term in office and austerity measures taken by the government to counter the economic crisis. Alain has been a vocal critic of the government speaking out against the austerity measures and has participated in several peaceful protests organised by IYINA.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Alain Didah Kemba unless he is formally charged with an internationally recognizable criminal offence;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending his release, Alain is not subjected to further torture or other ill-treatment and has regular access to his family and lawyer and to any medical attention he requires;
- Calling on them to conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations that Alain was subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in detention and to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice in a trial that meets international standards;
- Urging them to stop the repeated repression of human rights defenders and ensure an environment in which it is possible to defend human rights without fear of reprisal or intimidation.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 APRIL 2018 TO:

Public Prosecutor

Mahamat Saleh Youssouf
Tribunal de Grande Instance de
Ndjamena
Email: msyoussouf6@gmail.com
Salutation: Dear Prosecutor

Minister of Justice

Djimet Arabi
Ministère de la Justice
5495 Ndjamena
République du Tchad
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Public Security, territorial
administration and local governance
Ahmat Mahamat Bachir
Email: bachiram62@gmail.com

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY Mr OUSMANE MATAR BREME, Embassy of the Republic of Chad, Boulevard Lambertmont 52 1030 Brussels, 0032 2215 1975, Fax 0032 2216 3526, ambassade.tchad@chello.be

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

**AMNESTY
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In 2015, Chad's economy was affected by low international prices of crude oil which resulted in a negative growth of -3% in 2016.

To reduce the negative impact of the economic crisis, in August 2016 the government adopted 16 emergency austerity reform measures, including cancelling scholarships for university students in the countryside.

The austerity measures imposed on the population in August 2016 by the government sparked widespread sector strikes including civil servants, students and opposition groups in main cities including N'Djamena, Sarh, Pala and Bongor as the cost of living began to rise.

Throughout 2016 till September 2017, a number of protests were banned while others – for which organisers did not request for authorization – were interrupted by security forces. In April 2017, two members of IYINA, Nadjo Kaina and Bertrand Solloh were detained incommunicado for almost two weeks and ill-treated by the National Security Agency (Agence Nationale de Sécurité-ANS). The two activists were arrested and charged with conspiracy and calling an unauthorized gathering. Nadjo Kaina and Bertrand Solloh were given a six-month suspended prison sentence. On 28 November 2017, security forces prevented a citizen concert organised by IYINA to raise awareness on the values of the country and denounce poor governance in the country. Police officers and gendarmes were positioned around the venue and prevented participants from entering the venue for the concert.

On 16 January 2018, security forces dispersed protestors using tear gas during a student's demonstration against new university subscription fees of XAF 50,000 (around USD 94). The next day, on 17 January, students organised another protest which the authorities dispersed in the same way. A peaceful demonstration organized by civil society organizations on 25 January 2018 to protest against the high and increasing cost of living in Chad was also met with repression and excessive use of force.

In December 2017, in the same dynamic of reducing state expenses, the Government announced that there will be a decrease in public salaries of up to 45%. On 29 January 2018, trade unions launched a general strike of civil servants as a result of the reduction of salaries for state agents and the increase in income tax.

On 6 February, the Minister of Security threatened to ban any organization which organised demonstrations in the country. Two days later, the minister suspended ten opposition parties for "disturbing public order" after they organized a demonstration against the austerity measures put in place by the government resulting in the rise in the cost of living.

IYINA is a youth movement that brings together students, artists and young activists who raise awareness on governance and democracy.

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