

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST CLEARED OF CHARGES, ANOTHER AWAITING TRIAL

Activist Yahaya Badamassi has been released after he was cleared of all charges by the Appeal Court of Zinder on 6 December. He had been detained for eight months charged with “participation in an insurrectional movement” and “conspiracy against state security”. Activist Sadat Illiya Dan Malam is still in detention awaiting trial.

Yahaya Badamassi, Regional Coordinator of Alternative Espaces Citoyens, has been released. The Appeal court of Zinder, 500 miles east of the capital Niamey, cleared Yahaya Badamassi of all the charges against him on 6 December. He was arrested on 25 April and charged with “organizing and participating in a banned demonstration” and “causing damage to public property”. In June, he was also charged with “participation in an insurrectional movement” and “conspiracy against state security”. Yahaya Badamassi had previously been cleared of all charges on 28 August, but the prosecutor appealed the decision.

Sadat Illiya Dan Malam, an activist and Regional Coordinator of Mouvement Patriotique pour une Citoyenneté (the Patriotic Movement for Responsible Citizenship), is still in detention at Magaria, 80kms from Zinder, awaiting trial. He was arrested on 18 April and charged with “participation in an insurrectional movement” and “conspiracy against state security”.

The two activists were charged in relation to protests against the Finance Law that had been organized by civil society organizations in different parts of the country.

Amnesty International considers the delay in the hearing of Sadat Illiya Dan Malam’s case as highly suspicious and politically motivated.

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release Sadat Illiya Dan Malam detained solely in relation to his human rights work and drop all charges against him;
- Urging them to guarantee that human rights defenders and activists in Niger are able to carry out their human rights activities without any intimidation, harassment and fear of reprisals

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 18 JANUARY 2019 TO:

President of the Republic of Niger

M. Issoufou Mahamadou
Palais Présidentiel
Boulevard de la République,
Niamey, Niger
Fax: + 227 20 73 34 30
Email: pneniger@gmail.com

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice, Human Rights and

Attorney General
M. Marou Amadou
Boulevard du Djermaganda BP 466
Niamey, Niger
Fax: +227 20 72 37 77

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of State for the Interior Public
Security, Decentralization, and
Customary and Religious Affairs

M. Mohamed Bazoum
BP 893

Niamey, Niger

Fax: +227 20 72 21

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. HIS EXCELLENCY MR ABDERAHMANE ASSANE MAYAKI
Embassy of the Republic of Niger 154 Rue de Longchamp 75116 Paris FRANCE (00) 331 45 04 80 60 Fax (00) 331 45 04 79 73

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the second update of UA 93/18. Further information:
<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr43/9235/2018/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Since the 2018 Finance Bill, which provides for new taxes on housing, power and other items, was tabled in Parliament in November 2017, civil society organizations have campaigned for it to be repealed for what they denounce as its “anti-social” character. Protests have been organized since November 2017.

The Bill was passed into Law in January 2018. Civil society organizations have continued to protest against the 2018 Finance Law and calling for it to be amended arguing that it would drastically increase the cost of living and violate the right to an adequate standard of living for many already living in poverty. Five peaceful demonstrations have been organized since November 2017 and the sixth demonstration was banned. A public gathering in support of the Law in March 2018 was not banned.

In March, civil society organizations held a peaceful rally organized to protest against the finance law, despite the ban against it. The police lobbed tear gas to break up the protest. Twenty three people were arrested in connection with the protest, some at the offices of civil society organizations and others during the protests.

Two other trials against human rights defenders took place in Niger in less than a year in July and October. All the trials are linked to the mobilization over the last ten months against the 2018 Finance Law.

With the 2019 Finance Law currently being reviewed by parliamentarians, Amnesty International is concerned that any further anti-austerity protests will also be suppressed by the authorities. As in 2018, the 2019 budget proposed by the government contains austerity measures and new taxes on small business owners and low-income households.

Further information on UA: 93/18 Index: AFR 43/9527/2018 Issue Date: 7 December 2018