

URGENT ACTION

FOUR MONTH SUSPENDED SENTENCE FOR ACTIVISTS

Four Chadian activists arrested and charged for planning to organise peaceful public demonstrations have received a four month suspended prison sentence. The High Court of N'Djamena, Chad has also prohibited them from 'engaging in subversive activities'.

Mahamat Nour Ibedou and **Younous Mahadjir**, spokespersons of the civil society organisations platform 'Ça suffit', **Nadjo Kaina Palmer**, coordinator of the youth movement 'Iyina' and **Celine Narmadji**, spokesperson of the civil society movement 'Trop c'est trop !', were found guilty of 'incitement to an unarmed gathering' by the High Court of Justice of N'Djamena on 14 April. They received a four-month suspended prison sentence and have been prohibited from 'engaging in subversive activities'. Their lawyers have lodged an appeal.

The trial of the four activists begun on 7 April for charges of 'incitement to an unarmed gathering', 'disturbing public order' and 'disobeying a lawful order'. The four were planning to organise peaceful public demonstrations which would have taken place on 22 March and 29 March, to protest against the current President Idriss Deby's bid for re-election for a fifth mandate.

Mahamat Nour Ibedou and Younous Mahadjir were arrested on 21 March and 22 March respectively; Nadjo Kaina Palmer was arrested on 22 March and Celine Narmadji was arrested on 23 March. All four were arrested after reporting to the judicial police headquarters for questioning. They were detained at the judicial police headquarters before being transferred to the Amsinene prison in N'Djamena on 24 March.

During their detention, Amnesty International considered them to be prisoners of conscience who were arrested and sentenced solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on Chadian authorities to immediately quash the sentence against Mahamat Nour Ibedou, Younous Mahadjir, Nadjo Kaina Palmer and Celine Narmadji;
- Urging them to end harassment against human rights activists and defenders and political activists for the peaceful exercise of their human rights;
- Urging them to protect and ensure the rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly for all in conformity with Chad's international human rights obligations.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 27 MAY 2016 TO:

Prime Minister

Albert Pahimi Padacké
P.O. Box 463
N'Djamena, Chad
Twitter: @PrsidenceuTcha

Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

Minister of Justice and Human Rights

Dr. Ateib Idriss Halawlaw
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights
N'Djamena, Chad
Email: coofoui@yahoo.fr

Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Public Prosecutor
Alghassim Khamis
Office of the Public Prosecutor
Tribunal de Grande Instance
P.O. Box: 426
N'Djamena, Chad
Email: alghassimk21@gmail.com

Salutation: Dear Public Prosecutor

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. This is the third update of UA 68/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr20/3809/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

14 candidates are running in the presidential elections in Chad. The electoral campaign started on 20 March and the first round of elections was held on 10 April.

Amongst the candidates is the current Chadian President Idriss Deby who has been in power for 25 years after toppling Hissene Habre in 1990 and is seeking a fifth term in office. In 2005, the Chad Constitution was amended and the two-term limit on presidential tenure was eliminated.

For security reasons, on 19 March, the Chadian Minister of Public Security and Immigration, Ahmat Mahamat Bachir, publicly announced that all public demonstrations that were not part of the election campaigns were forbidden.

On 30 March, a request for a peaceful demonstration organised by civil society organisations to call on authorities to release the four activists was denied by the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration.

On 4 April, a day before another planned demonstration, Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam, one of the leaders of 'Ça suffit', was arrested for having written messages for a demonstration organised by civil society organisations on 5 April demanding that the authorities to release the four activists. He was detained at the judicial police headquarters until 8 April, when he was transferred to the Amsinene prison. The charges against him are 'incitement to an unarmed gathering', 'disturbing public order' and 'disobeying a lawful order'. Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam's trial was scheduled to start on 11 April, but has been postponed to 18 April.

On 5 April, two groups of protestors decided to peacefully demonstrate and call on the Chadian authorities to release the five activists. The venue of the rally of the first group was invaded by security forces who fired tear gas to disperse the protestors. The second group of protestors who were planning to demonstrate peacefully in front of the USA embassy was intercepted by the police. It was reported that at least two protestors were arrested and at least one was injured.

During the four activists' trial on 7 April, there was a heavy presence of security forces in and outside the Court building. Hundreds of people showed up at the court grounds in support of the four on trial. Due to space limitation, many of them stayed outside the court. They were singing and shouting slogans calling on the authorities to release the four activists. Many of the supporters were wearing t-shirts with images of the four activists and/or holding placards with slogans. At the end of the trial, when the prison guards and police were taking the activists back to prison, supporters refused to give passage to the prison car. Security forces fired live rounds and tear gas to disperse them, triggering a panic in which at least two people were injured.

Amnesty international published two press releases calling for the immediate release of the four activists - <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2016/03/tchad-les-autorites-doivent-liberer-deux-activistes-arrets-pour-avoir-prepare-une-manifestation-pacifique/>, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2016/04/tchad-le-maintien-en-detention-de-quatre-activistes-est-une-injustice/> and <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2016/04/tchad-la-condamnation-de-quatre-activistes-est-une-violation-de-exercice-du-droit-la-libert-dexpression/>.

Name: Mahamat Nour Ibedou (m), Younous Mahadjir (m), Nadjo Kaina Palmer (m) and Celine Narmadji (f)
Gender m/f: both

Further information on UA: 68/16 Index: AFR 20/3848/2016 Issue Date: 15 April 2016