

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST GIVEN FOUR MONTH SUSPENDED SENTENCE

Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam arrested and detained on 4 April for his participation in organising a peaceful demonstration that took place on 5 April in N'Djamena, Chad, has received a four month suspended prison sentence.

Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam, one of the leaders of the civil society organisations platform 'Ça suffit' (It's enough) was found guilty of 'attempting to incite an unarmed gathering' by the High Court of Justice of N'Djamena on 18 April. He has received a four-month suspended prison sentence. His lawyers have lodged an appeal.

Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam's trial begun on 18 April after it was adjourned on 11 April. He was on trial for charges of 'incitement to an unarmed gathering', 'disturbing public order', 'disobeying a lawful order' and accused of organising an unlawful demonstration which took place on 5 April without the authorisation of the Ministry of Public Security and Immigration. The peaceful demonstration was held to call on the authorities to release four detained activists, Mahamat Nour Ibedou, Younous Mahadjir, Nadjo Kaina Palmer and Celine Narmadji who were detained and tried for planning to organise peaceful demonstrations to protest against President Idriss Deby's re-election bid. He was transferred to the Amsinene prison after being charged.

Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam was arrested on 4 April while responding to a written summon he received from the Public Prosecutor Alghassim Khamis on 2 April. He was first detained at the judicial police headquarters.

During his detention, Amnesty International considered him to be a prisoner of conscience who was detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression

Please write immediately in French or your own language:

- Calling on Chadian authorities to immediately quash the sentence against Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam;
- 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 1 JUNE 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

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, ambassade.tchad@chello.be
Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

This is the first update of UA 84/16. Further information: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr20/3821/2016/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

From 21 to 23 March, four human rights activists, 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 arrested for planning to organise peaceful demonstrations against President Idriss Deby's re-election bid. They were detained at the judicial police headquarters before being transferred to the Amsinene prison on 24 April. The four were found guilty of 'incitement to an unarmed gathering' and received a four month suspended prison sentence on 14 April. They have also been prohibited from 'engaging in subversive activities'. The current urgent action on them is available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr20/3848/2016/en/>

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

During the four activists' trial, there was 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 human rights defenders. Many of the supporters were wearing t-shirts with images of the four defenders and/or holding placards with slogans.

When taking the defenders 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.

Name: Dr. Albissaty Salhe Alazam
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 84/16 Index: AFR 20/3869/2016 Issue Date: 20 April 2016