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## **Chad: Violent crackdown on peaceful protesters**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned about the safety of members and supporters of the political opposition as well as of human rights defenders in Chad, following a violent crackdown by the Chadian security forces in the wake of a disputed presidential election.

“The weeks since the announcement of the election results on 27 May 2001 have been marked by a pattern of government harassment and repression of the opposition,” Amnesty International said.

As the political situation in Chad became steadily more tense, Amnesty International is concerned that the Chadian security forces made excessive use of firearms and tear gas against non-violent protesters.

In the most recent incident, a peaceful demonstration on 11 June by around 100 women in front of the French embassy in the capital, N’Djamena, was violently dispersed by police. The women had intended to deliver a petition to the French Ambassador protesting the conduct of the presidential election. Several women were injured by tear gas canisters fired into the crowd. Those injured included Jacqueline Moudeina, a lawyer and member of the *Association Tchadienne pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l’Homme* (ATPDH), Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights,.

On 28 May, Brahim Selguet, an opposition activist, was shot and killed by the police. The shooting occurred as the security forces violently broke up an opposition meeting and briefly detained the six opposition presidential candidates who had gathered to plan a common response to the election result. The government has promised an investigation into the death, although no action appears to have been taken against the police officer responsible.

The six opposition candidates were again arrested in the morning of 30 May with some 30 other opposition activists and trade unionists. They were initially accused of “incitement to violence and civil disobedience” but were all released without charge the same day. Two of the opposition leaders, Ngarledjy Yorongar and Abderhamane Djesnebaye, were tortured, including by being beaten with iron bars, during their detention.

"The Chadian government should guarantee respect for the right to freedom of assembly and peaceful protest. It should order its security forces to exercise restraint. Officers believed responsible for committing human rights violations should be immediately suspended from duty and brought to justice, " Amnesty International said.

### **Background**

On 27 May 2001 Idriss Deby was re-elected President of Chad with more than 67 per cent of the vote. However, opposition candidates have alleged that the election was marred by fraud and have called for the result to be annulled. On 30 May the government banned gatherings of more than 20 people, although political protests have continued.

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