

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Possible Extrajudicial Execution

18 February 1992

CHAD: Joseph BEHIDI, Vice-President of the Chadian Human Rights

League

and at least 20 others

Amnesty International is concerned by reports from the Chadian capital N'djamena, that a lawyer and human rights worker, Joseph Behidi was shot dead by off-duty soldiers on the night of 16 February 1992. Joseph Behidi, Vice-President of the Chadian Human Rights League, Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'Homme, was reportedly shot in the head by two soldiers who stopped him at 3am in the morning as he was driving his nephew home from a nightclub.

Government critics have alleged that Joseph Behidi was deliberately killed because he had been defending the weekly newspaper N'djamena Hebdo against defamation charges filed by the army. Whether the motives of the killers were political or criminal should be determined by an impartial judicial inquiry which should lead to the prosecution of those responsible as well as the implementation of preventive measures which accord with international standards.

In reaction to this killing, the Chadian Embassy in Paris issued a statement on 17 February 1992 saying that the country's police chief and his deputy had been dismissed and that the head of the para-military gendarmerie and his deputy had been removed from their posts.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since 31 January 1992 at least 20 other people have been killed by soldiers or armed men in military uniforms. On 31 January soldiers killed five civilians, apparently in reprisal for the death of another soldier who was lynched by civilians when he attempted to steal a motorcycle. At least one civilian has reportedly been killed every night since then by men in military uniforms. The government has suggested that the violence has been stirred up by "invisible and diabolical hands" producing literature calling on civilians to fight back against the attacks. Observers have indicated that one of the factors contributing to the violence could be tension between the Zaghawa and Hadjerai ethnic groups, the respective power bases of the present and previous governments.

Although the authorities, who came to power under President Idris Déby in December 1990, criticised the massive human rights violations committed by the previous government under Hissene Habré, they took no action to introduce safeguards or procedures which would prevent similar abuses. In particular, no action is reported to have been taken to ensure that the security forces prevent the abusive or unlawful use of firearms or lethal force.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/airmail letters:

- expressing concern over reports suggesting that members of the security forces shot and killed an unarmed civilian, Joseph Behindi, in the early morning of 16 February 1992;

- urging the establishment of an independent and impartial inquiry into the circumstances of Joseph Behindi's death, and urging that those suspected of being responsible be brought to justice;

- expressing concern that at least 20 other civilians have been killed by soldiers or armed men in military uniforms in N'Djamena since 31 January 1992;

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- requesting the authorities to issue clear public instructions to all members of the security forces that the killing of unarmed civilians who do not pose a life-threatening danger to them is a criminal offence and that those found to be responsible will be brought to justice;

- pointing out that despite numerous requests by Amnesty International, and other human rights organizations that clear guidelines on the use of firearms be issued to members of the security forces, the authorities have not taken measures to put an end to extrajudicial executions, as appears to have been demonstrated by the killings since 31 January;

- recommending that new standing orders on the use of force and firearms be prepared and introduced, based on the United Nations Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, (adopted by the eighth UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders on 7 December 1990 and welcomed by the UN General Assembly in Resolution 45/121 on 14 December 1990).

APPEALS TO:

1) President:

Général Idriss Deby
Président de la République du Tchad
N'Djamena, République du Tchad

**Monsieur le Président de la République /
Dear President**

Telegrams: President Habre, N'Djamena, Chad
Telexes: 5201 PRESIREP KD or 5307 PRESIREP KD
Faxes: + 235 51 4501

2) Prime Minister:

Monsieur Jean Alingue BAWOYEU
Premier Ministre
Présidence de la République
N'Djamena

**Monsieur le Premier Ministre /
Dear Prime Minister**

République du Tchad
Telegrams: Premier Ministre Bawoyeu, N'Djamena, Chad
Telexes: 5201 PRESIREP KD or 5307 PRESIREP KD
Faxes: + 235 51 4501

3) Minister of Justice and Attorney General:

Monsieur Youssouf TOGOIMI
Ministre de la Justice et Garde des Sceaux
Ministère de la Justice
N'Djamena

**Monsieur le Ministre /
Dear Minister**

République du Tchad
Telegrams: Ministre Justice, N'Djamena, Chad
Telexes: c/o 5328 MINAFFET KD

4) Minister of Defence:

Monsieur Nadjita BEASSOUMAL
Ministre de la Defense
Ministère de la Defense
N'Djamena

**Monsieur le Ministre /
Dear Minister**

République du Tchad

Telegrams: **Ministre Defense, N'Djamena, Chad**

Faxes: c/o + 235 51 4501

COPIES TO;

1) Human Rights Organization:

Monsieur Djondang TCHAKNONE
Président
Ligue tchadienne des droits de l'Homme
BP 2037
N'Djamena
République du Tchad

2) Newspaper:

Le Rédacteur-en-chef
N'Djamena-Hebdo
11 Avenue Charles de Gaulle
BP 760
N'Djamena
République du Tchad

and to diplomatic representatives of Chad in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Please check with the International Secretariat, or your Section Office, if sending appeals after 31 March 1992.