

23 March 2021

Chad: Arrest and detention of human rights defender Mahamat Nour Ibedou

On 20 March 2021, human rights defender **Mahamat Nour Ibedou** was arrested during a peaceful demonstration in N'Djamena. He was detained at the Central Police Station in N'Djamena until 23 March, when he was released without charges.

[Mahamat Nour Ibedou](#) is the Secretary General of the *Convention Tchadienne pour les Droits Humains—CTDDH* (Chadian Convention for the Protection of Human Rights). CTDDH is a prominent civil society organisation in Chad, championing civil and political rights. The organisation has been documenting and denouncing human rights rights violations in the country, such as impunity, corruption, shrinking civic space and the adoption of draconian laws. Mahamat Nour Ibedou has been leading CTDDH since 2011.

Mahamat Nour Ibedou was released from detention in Central Police Station in N'Djamena on 23 March 2021, with no charges brought against him. The human rights defender had been on 20 March 2021, whilst participating in a peaceful protest in N'Djamena organised by a number of political parties and civil society organizations to boycott the upcoming presidential election of 11 April 2021, and reject the candidacy of President Idris Deby on human rights grounds. The President is seeking re-election for a sixth term in office. The protest was violently dispersed by police officers with tear gas. At least 40 protesters, including human rights defender Mahamat Nour Ibedou, were arrested during the dispersal and detained at the Central Police Station in N'Djamena. All of the detained protesters were released the following day, except for Mahamat Nour Ibedou, who remained in detention in the police station for a further three days. The human rights defender was accused of public disorder, and was granted access to his lawyer whilst detained.

This was the sixth time that Mahamat Nour Ibedou has been arrested in connection with his human rights work. On 6 February 2021, the human rights defender was arrested whilst participating in a peaceful protest, also organized to protest the candidacy of President Idris Deby Itno in the upcoming election. Mahamat Nour Ibedou was charged with participating in an unarmed gathering and issued a three month suspended sentence on 12 February, and was subsequently released.

On 29 November 2019, the human rights defender received a notification summoning him to appear before the criminal unit at the Central Police Station in N'Djamena, in relation to a defamation complaint filed against him by Bokhit Itno, a nephew of the President. The complaint was made in response a press release signed by Mahamat Nour Ibedou on behalf of CTDDH, denouncing the alleged sequestration and physical abuse of three people by Bokhit Itno on his private property. On 3 December 2019, Mahamat Nour Ibedou presented himself at the Central Police Station and was arrested. He was released on 8 January 2020, and the charges against him were dropped, following a dismissal order issued by the N'Djamena examining magistrate.

Front Line Defenders welcomes the release of human rights defender Mahamat Nour Ibedou, but remains seriously concerned by his arrest and detention, which it believes is directly related to his legitimate work defending human rights and exercising his right to freedom of peaceful assembly. Front Line Defenders is also concerned by the apparent targeting of Mahamat Nour Ibedou who remained in detention for three days, despite the release of other protesters, which can be viewed as an intentional attempt to silence him and other human rights defenders ahead of the upcoming presidential election.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Chad to:

1. Cease targeting human rights defender Mahamat Nour Ibedou in retaliation against his peaceful and legitimate work in defense of human rights in Chad;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Chad are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions, including harassment, threats and arrest.

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