

URGENT ACTION

JEAN LAOKOLÉ CHARGED AND AWAITING TRIAL

Writer and humanitarian worker Jean Laokolé was transferred to the Am Sinene detention centre in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena, on 25 March. He had been detained incommunicado for three days. He has been charged with defamation.

Jean Laokolé appeared before a magistrate on 1 April 2013. His lawyer has stated that procedure in the case of defamation has not been followed and that there are no reasons that Jean Loakole should not be granted bail while he awaits for his case to be heard before a magistrate.

The conditions are so deplorable at the Am Sinene detention centre where Jean Loakolé is now detained, that they amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment. He has access to his family and to a lawyer. A hearing is scheduled to take place in the coming days.

Please write immediately in French, English, Arabic or your own language:

- Express concern that Jean Laokolé may be a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression, in which case he should be released immediately and unconditionally;
- Urge the authorities to respect Jean Laokolé's right to a fair trial, including the right not to be subjected to unnecessary pre-trial detention;
- Express concern that the deplorable conditions in which Jean Laokolé is detained at Am Sinene detention centre amount to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment or punishment.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 28 MAY 2013 TO:

President

Monsieur Idriss Deby
Président de la République
Présidence de la République
BP 74, N'Djamena
Tchad
Fax: +235 2251 45 01
Salutation: Dear President

Minister of Justice

Monsieur Abdoulaye Sabre Fadoul
Ministre de la Justice
Ministere de la Justice
BP 426, N'Djamena
Tchad
Email: justice@intnet.td
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:

Minister of Human Rights
Madame Amina Kodjiyana
Ministre des Droits de l'Homme
Ministere des Droits de l'Homme
BP 169, N'Djamena
Tchad
Email: justice@intnet.td

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 73/13. Further information:
www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR20/001/2013/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The lives of prisoners in Chad are often put at risk by harsh detention conditions. Cells are severely overcrowded, food and drinking water inadequate and prisoners are dependent on their families to provide necessities. Health care and medical services do not exist in the majority of prisons, and riots, due to the appalling conditions, have resulted in prisoners being shot dead. Resources allocated to the prisons are limited and undermined by bribery and corruption.

Writer and humanitarian worker Jean Laokolé is the son of Jean-Baptiste Laokolé, political opposition leader and vice-chairperson of a coalition of opposition political parties, of which Ibni Oumar was the president. Ibni Oumar was arrested on 3 February 2008 at his home in the Chadian capital, N'Djamena, by members of the security services, following a failed attack on the city by armed opposition groups. He has not been seen since.

Jean Laokolé's mother is the sister of Salek Kebzabo, the leader of the opposition in the Chadian parliament and President of the political party National Union for Democracy and Renewal (UNDR).

Name: Jean Laokolé
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 73/13 Index: AFR 20/002/2013 Issue Date: 16 April 2013