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Responses to Information Requests

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21 April 2016

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Chad: National Union of Chadian Students (Union nationale des étudiants tchadiens, UNET), including the arrest of its leader in 2015; outcome of his trial; circumstances of his release; demonstrations organized by UNET; reaction of authorities to demonstrations (2015-April 2016)

Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Ottawa

1. Overview of UNET

Sources refer to UNET as a student union (AFP 13 Aug. 2015; Attidjani 14 Aug. 2015). According to the Internet site of the Young Communists Movement of France (Mouvement Jeunes communistes de France, MJCF), UNET is the [translation] "main student organization" in Chad (MJCF 3 Jan. 2016).

2. Demonstrations of March and August 2015 and Reaction of Authorities

An Agence France-Presse (AFP) press release published by the Internet news site JournalduTchad.com indicates that in March 2015, [translation] "schools and universities in N'Djamena remained closed for several days following a violent student demonstration against the compulsory wearing of helmets, the price of which has increased" (AFP 13 Aug. 2015). Sources report that UNET was the instigator of the strike, which lasted for three days and was accompanied by demonstrations, and that the government closed the schools (Times24 11 Mar. 2015; RFI 11 Mar. 2015). In his blog entitled Jeunes Tchad, an initiative of the Radio France internationale (RFI) Media Workshop (Atelier des médias) (Mondoblog n.d.), [translation] "political activist and independent analyst" Djarma Acheikh Ahmat Attidjani states that three students were killed by police, who allegedly "violently repressed" the demonstration (Attidjani 14 Aug. 2015). *Jeune Afrique* also indicates that the demonstration was [translation] "repressed" by police and gendarmes and reports "at least one death," but adds that, according to hospital sources, there were three deaths and several wounded (10 Mar. 2015).

3. Arrest of UNET President

Sources report that UNET student members [about 30, according to AFP (13 Aug. 2015)] who gathered in N'Djamena to discuss and organize a strike concerning the nonpayment of bursaries to students were arrested on 12 August 2015 (Attidjani 14 Aug. 2015; RFI 4 Sept. 2015; AFP 13 Aug. 2015). According to a UNET member quoted by AFP, [translation] "this meeting brought together all of the secretaries general of the provincial divisions of UNET" (ibid.). The sources specify that the President of UNET, Nadjo Kaina, was also arrested (Attidjani 14 Aug. 2015; RFI 4 Sept. 2015). Sources note that all were released the same day or before 4 September 2015, except for Nadjo Kaina (*Alwihda* 14 Aug. 2015; RFI 4 Sept. 2015). Sources indicate that Nadjo Kaina was charged with [translation] "disturbing the peace" (ibid.; *Alwihda* 14 Aug. 2015) and "forgery and uttering counterfeit documents" (ibid.). In his blog, Makaila Nguebla, a Chadian journalist and opponent of the Idriss Déby government (RFI 15 July 2013), states that Nadjo Kaina was [translation]

"detained arbitrarily" (Nguebla 14 Aug. 2015). A human rights advocate quoted by the African news site *Alwihda* asserts that Nakjo Kaina was [translation] "taken to the Amsiné prison" (*Alwihda* 14 Aug. 2015). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

The Action Movement for Change in Chad (Mouvement d'action pour le changement au Tchad, MACT), a prodemocracy movement formed in 2011 (MACT 4 Dec. 2012), notes that following the arrest, the secretaries general of UNET assembled in the offices of the Ardep Jouma Faculty to demand [translation] "the unconditional and timely release of their president, while demanding a medical analysis of his condition" (ibid. 15 Aug. 2015).

3.1 Treatment of UNET President While in Detention

Sources describe the treatment of the UNET President during his detention as follows:

He was detained [translation] "in inhumane conditions" (GRAT 15 Aug. 2015).

He was subjected to [translation] "corporal punishment" during a "torture session," during which the director general of the national police "demanded ... he step down from the UNET presidency" (ACTUS/prpe 14 Aug. 2015).

He was subjected to [translation] "severe corporal punishment," and the Director General of the police would not allow him to be transferred to the hospital to receive care (*Alwihda* 14 Aug. 2015).

3.2 Release and Trial of UNET President

On 4 September 2015, RFI reported that the [translation] "trial of the [UNET] President, postponed several times to date," had begun (RFI 4 Sept. 2015). The following day, RFI reported that the justice authorities had released Nadjo Kaina because [translation] "the offence was not established" [1] (RFI 5 Sept. 2015). Further information on the reasons for Nadjo Kaina's release could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Deuhb Eladjé Emmanuel, a Chadian [translation] "activist blogger" and member of the team of reporters for Connecting in Times of Duress (CTD) (CTD n.d.a), an Internet site created to disseminate information and research on the conflicts in Central Africa, funded by the Leiden University Institute for History in the Netherlands (CTD n.d.b), states that Nadjo Kaina was released on 4 September 2015, [translation] "after a lengthy court battle" (Emmanuel Sept. 2015).

Sources report that a press conference scheduled by UNET for 19 September 2015 was prohibited by the authorities (ibid.; UNET 19 Sept. 2015; Tchad infos [Sept. 2015]); it had already been cancelled once, on 16 September (ibid.). In a communiqué dated 2 October 2015, the Enough Is Enough (Trop c'est trop) coalition, [translation] "a coalition of civil society organizations [that] ... protests against the excesses and abuses [of] power" (DW 19 Nov. 2014), states that the press conference was prohibited [translation] "to muzzle the students" (Trop c'est trop 2 Oct. 2015).

Information on the activities of UNET and Nadjo Kaina from October to December 2015 could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

4. Demonstration of December 2015

Sources indicate that on 28 December 2015 in N'Djamena, the students demonstrated to demand the payment of their bursaries (MJCF 3 Jan. 2016; Tchad infos 29 Dec. 2015). The same sources add that the [translation] "peaceful" rally was interrupted by the intervention of police forces who burst into the faculty offices to disperse the students, "firing live bullets into the air" (ibid.; MJCF 3 Jan. 2016). The Chadian news site Tchad infos adds that, as part of the demonstration, UNET published a press release in which it reportedly gave the government a 48-hour deadline [translation] "to come up with the three months of bursary payments in arrears ... threatening to organize a mass rally in front of the public treasury" (Tchad infos 29 Dec. 2015).

On 28 December 2015, Tchad infos pointed out that Barka Le Roi Manamon Makissam was interim president of UNET at the time (ibid.). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

Sources wrote in March and April 2016 that Nadjo Kaina was still president of UNET and was heading up a number of civil society organizations (RFI 20 Mar. 2016; Tickle 1 Apr. 2016).

5. Trial, in March 2016

Journalist Rebecca Tickle, a social and political sciences graduate with an interest in, among other subjects, Central Africa (Fondation Moumié 14 Aug. 2009), relates on her blog *Citoyens du monde* that Nadjo Kaina, whom she presents not only as the President of UNET, but also the [translation] "leader of the 'Lyina' youth movement," which is reportedly part of the That's Enough! (Ça suffit !) coalition, was detained by the authorities between 21 and 23 March 2016, "by order of the Public Prosecutor" and then transferred to Am Sinéné prison located in a suburb north of N'Djamena (Tickle 1 Apr. 2016). The journalist adds that he was not released as planned at the beginning of the week and that, on 31 March, he appeared in court on charges of "inciting an unauthorized assembly, attempting to disturb the peace and obstructing the exercise of lawful authority" (ibid.). The journalist states that, according to the Chadian media, the trial was suspended and adjourned to 7 April 2016 (ibid.).

Further information on this new arrest and trial could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

Note

[1] For an offence to be [translation] "properly established, three consecutive elements must be present: the legal element, the material element and the moral element. If one element is missing, the offence cannot be established" (Le Tchadanthropus 16 Feb. 2015).

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