

# Human Rights Watch

## Torture, Former Combatants, Political Prisoners, Terror Suspects, & Terrorists

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/04/27/senegal-hissene-habre-trial>

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Updated Question and Answer Document

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(Dakar, April 27, 2015) Human Rights Watch on April 27 issued an updated questions and answers [document](#) about the upcoming trial in Senegal of the former Chadian dictator Hissne Habr.

The Hissne Habr trial shows that it is possible for victims, with tenacity and perseverance, to bring a dictator to court, said [Reed Brody](#), counsel at Human Rights Watch who has worked with the survivors since 1999. In a case which looked dead so many times, the victims made it clear that they were never going away until they got justice.

Habr will stand trial on charges of crimes against humanity, torture, and war crimes before the [Extraordinary African Chambers](#) in the Senegal court system. The chambers were inaugurated by Senegal and the African Union in February 2013 to prosecute the person or persons most responsible for international crimes committed in Chad between 1982 and 1990, the period when Habre ruled Chad. The president of the Trial Chamber is [Gberdao Gustave Kam](#) of Burkina Faso, who will sit with two senior Senegalese judges, Amady Diouf and Moustapha Ba, and Pape Ousmane Diallo of Senegal as an alternate.

The judges were inaugurated on April 23, and Senegal's minister of justice Sidiki Kaba said that the [trial would begin in June](#).

Habr's trial will be the first in the world in which the courts of one country prosecute the former ruler of another for alleged human rights crimes. It will also be the first universal jurisdiction case to proceed to trial in Africa. Universal jurisdiction is a legal basis in international law that allows national courts to prosecute the most serious crimes even when committed abroad, by a foreigner and against foreign victims.

The question-and-answer [document](#) includes information about the history of the case and details about the trial and the [Extraordinary African Chambers](#).

Habr is [accused of thousands of political killings and systematic torture](#) during his rule, from 1982 to 1990, when he was deposed by the current president, Idriss Dby Itno, and fled to Senegal. After a 22-year campaign by his victims, the chambers [indicted](#) Habr in July 2013 for crimes against humanity, torture, and war crimes and placed him in pretrial custody. After a 19-month investigation, judges of the [Extraordinary African Chambers](#) [found](#) that there was sufficient evidence for Habre to face trial.

On March 25, 2015, a court in Chad [convicted](#) 20 top security agents of Habr's government on torture and murder charges.

The United States and Chad's Hissne Habr 1982-1990

Time is Running Out for the Victims



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