

Human Rights Watch

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

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/03/25/chad-habre-era-agents-convicted-torture>

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20 Convicted, \$125 Million in Reparations to Victims Ordered

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(NDjamna) The torture conviction in Chad on March 25 of 20 top security agents of the 1982-1990 Hissne Habr dictatorship is a victory for justice, Human Rights Watch said today. The criminal court acquitted four others and ordered that the Chadian government and the convicted persons pay US\$125 million in reparations to over 7,000 victims.

Among those convicted to life sentences were Saleh Younous, former head of the Directorate of Documentation and Security (DDS), Habrs political police, and [Mahamat Djibrine](#) described as one of the most feared torturers in Chad by a 1992 Chadian Truth Commission. Both men were also wanted by a court in Senegal trying Hissne Habr, but [Chad declined to transfer them](#).

Twenty-four years after the end of the Habr dictatorship, and fourteen years after the survivors filed their complaints, today's convictions and the order of reparations are a stunning victory for Hissne Habrs victims, said [Reed Brody](#), counsel for Human Rights Watch, who has worked with Habrs victims since 1999 and observed the proceedings. The sentencing of state officials for human rights crimes is not only a testament to the courage and tenacity of the victims, it is a remarkable development in a country where impunity for past atrocities has been the norm.

Habrs government is [accused of thousands of political killings and widespread torture](#).

Five of the accused were sentenced to hard labor for life. In practice, hard labor is not used and generally signifies imprisonment. The prosecutor had requested 16 condemnations and 7 acquittals against the 23 accused.

The decision read out by court president Timothe Ynan also ordered that 75 billion CFA francs (approximately US\$ 125 million) in reparations be paid in compensation to 7,000 victims who were plaintiffs in the case. Half is to be paid out of the defendants assets and half is to be paid by the Chadian government, which was found to be liable for the defendants actions.

The court also ordered that the government within a year erect a monument to those who were killed under Habr and that the former DDS headquarters be turned into a museum. These were both among the long-standing demands of the victims associations.

At the trial, which began on November 14, 2014, but was twice suspended because of an unrelated lawyers strike, about 50 victims described their torture and mistreatment at the hands of agents of the DDS and other Habr-era security agencies.

The trial in Chad ends as the Extraordinary African Chambers, a special chamber created by the African Union and Senegal in an appeal court in Dakar, Senegal, prepares to hear the case against Hissne Habr. That court indicted and arrested Habr in July 2013 and on February 13, 2015, four investigating judges [decided](#) that there was sufficient evidence to send him to a trial which is scheduled to begin in Senegal in a few months.

The defendants on trial in NDjamna were accused of murder, torture, kidnapping, arbitrary detention, and assault and battery. Hundreds of Chadians attended the trial each day, which was summarized each evening on the national television news. Although the charges leading to the trial were filed by survivors in 2000, the case in Chad languished until after Habr himself was arrested in Dakar in 2013. Many of the accused were holding key positions in the Chadian administration until they were arrested in 2013 and 2014.

Others convicted include Nodjigoto Haunan, former director of the National Security Agency (*Suret nationale*), implicated in the repression against the Zaghawa ethnic group, and Khalil Djibrine, former department head of the DDS in the south of Chad during the repression there of 1983-1984. A full list of those convicted and acquitted can be found [here](#).

The victims leaders expressed joy at the decision.

Finally, finally, the men who brutalized us and then laughed in our faces for decades have got their comeuppance,said Clment Abaifouta, president of the Association of Victims of the Crimes of Hissne Habr, who as a prisoner under Habr was forced to dig graves for many of his fellow inmates. The government now needs to implement the decision so the victims at long last receive reparations for what they suffered and that steps are taken to remember what happened to us.

Habres one-party rule was marked by widespread atrocities, including the targeting of certain ethnic groups. DDS files [recovered](#) by Human Rights Watch in 2001 [reveal](#) the names of 1,208 people who were killed or died in detention, and 12,321 victims of human rights violations. Habr was deposed in 1990 by the current president, Idriss Dby Itno. Habr fled to Senegal and lived there in exile. He was indicted by the Extraordinary African Chambers in July 2013 and placed in pretrial detention.

The United States and Chads Hissne Habr 1982-1990

Time is Running Out for the Victims

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