

URGENT ACTION

ACTIVIST HELD WITHOUT CHARGE FOR 200 DAYS

Peace activist Abdul Karim Ali has been arbitrarily detained without charge since 11 August 2022. While the authorities have provided no formal reason for his detention, he was interrogated repeatedly about a video he made on 9 July 2022 denouncing a Cameroonian military chief for allegedly torturing civilians. If this is the basis for his detention, it is a violation of his right to freedom of expression. Two of Abdul Karim's friends have also been taken into detention alongside him since then. Amnesty International is calling on the Cameroonian authorities to either charge the three men with a recognisable criminal offence or immediately release them.

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
2. [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 1.23**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

H.E Joseph Beti Assomo

Minister of Defence of the Republic of Cameroon
Ministry of Defence
Boulevard de la Réunification
B.P. 1162, Yaoundé, Cameroon
Email: defcamer@gmail.com

H.E. Ambassador Henri Etoundi Essomba

Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon
2349 Massachusetts Ave N.W., Washington, DC 20008
Phone: 202 265 8790 | Fax: 202 387 3826
Email: mail@cameroonembassyusa.org
Contact Form:
<https://www.cameroonembassyusa.org/main23/contact.html>

To His Excellency,

I am writing to request your urgent attention to the case of **Abdul Karim Ali**, a prominent Cameroonian peace activist who has been in detention without charge since 11 August 2022. Abdul Karim Ali ran the Peace Research Center and would regularly deliver speeches and trainings on peace and security, including internationally. He was a vocal advocate of the Swiss-led mediation process as a way out of the Anglophone crisis. Two of his friends have also been detained in relation to their connection with him.

On 11 August 2022, Abdul Karim Ali was arrested, without a warrant, and taken into detention in the city of Bamenda, north-western Cameroon, where he was held for 84 days – 4 of which were incommunicado – at a military police station (gendarmerie) in degrading conditions, including deprivation of food and water for several days, having to use a single bucket both as a toilet and for bathing. While no formal reason has been given for his detention, he was interrogated repeatedly about a video he made on 9 July 2022 denouncing a Cameroonian military chief known as 'Moja Moja' for reportedly torturing civilians. Two of Abdul Karim's friends and his brother were also later detained by the gendarmerie, with reference to vague allegations of being his drivers. While his brother was released after payment of a large sum of money, his friends **Rabio Enuah** and **Yenkong Sulemanu** remain in detention alongside Abdul Karim Ali. In November 2022, they were transferred to the Secretary of State Defense (Secretariat d'État à la Défense - SED), a detention centre in Yaoundé, the capital, where they remain to this day.

As of 27 February 2023, Abdul Karim Ali has spent 200 days in detention without charge, in violation of Cameroonian law and international human rights standards. If denouncing the actions of Chief Moja Moja is the only reason for his arrest, he should be released immediately, since his detention would stem solely from the peaceful exercise of his right to freedom of expression. Neither Rabio Enuah nor Yenkong Sulemanu have been charged with any crime either.

In light of the above, I urge you to ensure that Abdul Karim Ali is immediately released or charged with a recognizable criminal offence. Rabio Enuah and Yenkong Sulemanu should also be immediately from detention or charged with a recognizable criminal offence.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The three men have appeared before the Military Tribunal of Yaoundé twice since they were transferred to the Secretary of State Defense detention centre in November 2022 but have never been presented before the State Prosecutor. None of the three men have been charged with any crime.

Abdul Karim Ali's close family have been forced into hiding after receiving threats. Amnesty International learned that Abdul Karim Ali's wife has received threats through anonymous calls, which have led her to flee their home. The calls warned her not to alert people outside Cameroon about his situation and asked her to bring her husband and family's passports to the military who were detaining Abdul Karim Ali.

This is not the first time Abdul Karim Ali has been detained, apparently in relation to his activism. On 25 September 2019 he was arrested and taken to the SED where he was held, initially without access to a lawyer for five days, before finally being released without charge weeks later (1 November 2019).

Since 2016, the Cameroon authorities have been imprisoning hundreds of people simply for peacefully exercising their rights to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly. For example, five journalists are currently detained, as well as 62 people who protested at demonstrations organized by the political party the MRC. There were also hundreds of arrests at peaceful protests against the perceived discrimination against the country's Anglophone regions. Many of the detained individuals have faced convictions by military courts on charges that criminalize freedom of expression and peaceful assembly, in violation of international human rights standards.

The detention of people simply for exercising their rights to freedom of expression and freedom of peaceful assembly is arbitrary, as it violates the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights (article 6), and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (article 9), ratified by Cameroon.

Furthermore, the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, to which Cameroon is a signatory, prohibits enforced disappearance. According to the Convention "enforced disappearance is considered to be the arrest, detention, abduction or any other form of deprivation of liberty by agents of the State or by persons or groups of persons acting with the authorization, support or acquiescence of the State, followed by a refusal to acknowledge the deprivation of liberty or by concealment of the fate or whereabouts of the disappeared person, which place such a person outside the protection of the law." As a state party to the Convention, Cameroon has the obligation to "refrain from acts which would defeat the object and purpose of a treaty".

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: French/English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 24 April 2023

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PRONOUN: Abdul Karim Ali (he/him)