

**Urgent Action Office** 3-1992 Yonge Street Toronto ON M4S 1Z7 Phone: (416) 363-9933 Fax: (416) 363-3103 [urgentaction@amnesty.ca](mailto:urgentaction@amnesty.ca)  
First UA: 1/23 Index: AFR 17/6343/2023 Cameroon of February 27, 2023

## **CAMEROON ACTIVIST, ABDUL KARIM ALI, HELD ARBITRARILY FOR 200 DAYS**

Peace activist Abdul Karim Ali has been arbitrarily detained since August 11, 2022. He was interrogated repeatedly about a video he made on July 9, 2022, denouncing a Cameroonian military chief for allegedly torturing civilians.

Two of his friends have since been detained alongside him. The three men were then remanded to custody February 02, 2023 on accusations of ‘hostility against the fatherland’, ‘failure to report’, ‘secession’, and ‘rebellion’.

Abdul Karim’s detention appears to be based on the video or his activism for peace, in direct violation of his right to freedom of expression. The Cameroonian authorities should drop the charges against them unless they can promptly produce reliable evidence of an internationally recognizable crime.

### **Write to the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Cameroon urging him to:**

- Ensure that the charges against Abdul Karim Ali, Rabio Enuah and Yenkong Sulemanu are dropped.
- Guarantee that the three men are immediately released unless the authorities can promptly produce reliable evidence that they have committed an internationally recognizable criminal offence.

### **Write to:**

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](mailto:defcamer@gmail.com)  
Salutation: *His Excellency*

### **And copy:**

Mr. Philippe Aime Landry FOU DA TSILLA OTTO  
Minister-Counsellor & Acting High Commissioner  
High Commission for the Republic of Cameroon  
170 Clemow Avenue  
Ottawa, ON K1S 2B4  
Tel: (613) 236-1522, -1524, -1569  
Email: [office@hc-cameroon.ca](mailto:office@hc-cameroon.ca)

\*\*\*Please copy the Minister of Justice and keeper of the Seal Laurent Ezzo (responsible for civil courts) in your emails.

Email: [celcom@minjustice.cm](mailto:celcom@minjustice.cm)

[contact@minjustice.gov.cm](mailto:contact@minjustice.gov.cm)

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

The three men were presented before the Military Tribunal of Yaoundé three times. During their third appearance, they were remanded to custody by the Examining Magistrate on accusations of ‘hostility against the fatherland’; ‘failure to report’; ‘secession’, and ‘rebellion’.

Abdul Karim Ali’s close family have been forced into hiding after receiving threats. Amnesty International learned that Abdul Karim Ali’s wife had received threats through anonymous calls, which 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 September 25, 2019, he was arrested and taken to the Secretary of State Defense detention center where he was held, initially without access to a lawyer for five days, before finally being released without charge weeks later (November 1, 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 people living in the country’s Anglophone regions. Many of the detained individuals have faced convictions by military courts on charges that criminalize the rights to 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 and it violates the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, 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”.