

Journalists fined, one jailed over criminal defamation complaint in Chad

Authorities in Chad should not challenge the appeals of journalists Martin Inoua Doulguet and Abdramane Boukar Koyon, and should take immediate action to repeal legislation that criminalises acts of journalism, the Committee to Protect Journalists said.



A police officer is seen in N'Djamena, Chad, on July 11, 2015. A N'Djamena court recently charged two Chadian journalists with criminal defamation and sentenced one to jail. Credit: CPJ/Reuters/Mourine Ngambassa.

On September 23, a court in Chad's capital, N'Djamena, found Doulguet, director of the privately owned *Salam Info* newspaper, guilty on criminal charges of defamation and conspiracy, and sentenced him to three years in prison following a defamation complaint from Toupta Boguena, a former government official, according to Olivier Gouara, the journalist's lawyer, who spoke to CPJ via messaging app.

The court also found Koyon, director of the privately owned *Le Moustik* newspaper, guilty of the same charges, but did not sentence him to jail time, according to Gouara, who also represented Koyon.

The court fined Koyon and Doulguet one million Central African francs (\$1,675) each, to be paid to the state, and awarded Boguena 20 million francs (\$33,514) in damages, which the journalists will be jointly responsible for paying, Gouara said.

The charges in both cases stemmed from defamation complaints filed by Boguena, a former Chadian minister of health,

over reports published in *Le Moustik* on June 19 and in *Salam Info* on July 14, Gouara told CPJ. On September 16, the judge added criminal conspiracy charges to the defamation complaints, Gouara said. Yesterday, Gouara filed an appeal for both cases, he said.

“The sentencing of Chadian journalist Martin Inoua Doulguet to three years imprisonment for publishing an article is outrageous,” said Muthoki Mumo, CPJ’s Sub-Saharan Africa representative, in Nairobi. “The financial penalties levied against Doulguet and Abdramane Boukar Koyon are appalling. Their appeal should be accepted and Doulguet should be freed as swiftly as possible.”

Le Moustik’s June 19 report, which CPJ reviewed, concerned a criminal witchcraft and sexual assault complaint involving Boguena. The *Salam Info* report, which CPJ also reviewed, concerned a July 13 press conference in which the criminal investigation into Boguena was dropped.

Police arrested Doulguet and Koyon on August 16, and the journalists were detained until their sentencings on September 23, Gouara said. Koyon was released after his sentencing and has not paid the fine, pending his appeal; Doulguet was taken to Amsiné Prison in N’Djamena, Gouara told CPJ.

Gouara said he did not know why only Doulguet had been sentenced to prison.

Chad’s GDP per capita, a measure of the country’s wealth divided by its population, was \$1,920 per person in 2018, according to the [World Bank](#).

When contacted by CPJ over messaging app, Alain Kagombe, Boguena’s lawyer, declined repeated requests to comment on Doulguet and Koyon’s cases. CPJ also messaged Youssouf Tome, the first prosecutor of the N’Djamena criminal court, who said he could not comment on the cases.

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