

10 April 2020

Chad: Risk of abduction of human rights defender Dingamnayal Versinis

On 2 April 2020, human rights defender **Dingamnayal Versinis** received a call from an unidentified person who warned him that intelligence officers were planning to abduct him. Since then, he has been in hiding as he fears for his life.

[Dingamnayal Versinis](#) is the president of *Collectif tchadien contre la vie chère* (Chadian Collective Against the High Cost of Living- CTVC). The organisation denounces the increasing costs of basic goods and services in the country and mobilises civil society to peacefully defend economic rights.

On 31 March 2020, Dingamnayal Versinis publicly called on the Chadian government to amend some of the measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, explaining that it was difficult to implement them given the frequent electricity shortages in the country. He also highlighted the lack of access to drinking water faced by many Chadians and the increase in its price between 2019 and 2020. Moreover, the defender denounced the lack of preparation of the security forces implementing the preventive measures against COVID-19.

On the evening of 2 April 2020, the first day of a country-wide curfew imposed by the government, Dingamnayal Versinis received a call from an unknown individual who warned him that four intelligence officers were tracking his location and planning to abduct him. The caller advised the defender to relocate. Fearing for his safety and physical integrity, Dingamnayal Versinis has gone into hiding.

Front Line Defenders is seriously concerned about the risk of abduction faced by human rights defender Dingamnayal Versinis. It believes that he is being targeted solely as a result of his peaceful and legitimate human rights work and his exercise of the right to freedom of expression.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Chad to:

1. Investigate the alleged surveillance of Dingamnayal Versinis as well as the alleged plans to abduct him, and take all necessary measures to guarantee his physical and psychological integrity and security;
2. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in Chad are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.

Front Line Defenders respectfully reminds you that the United Nations Declaration on the Right and Responsibility of Individuals Groups and Organs of Society to Promote and Protect Universally Recognized Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly on 9 December 1998, recognises the legitimacy of the activities of human rights defenders, their right to freedom of association and to carry out their activities without fear of reprisals. We would particularly draw your attention to Article 6 (b): “*Everyone has the right, individually and in association with others: (b) As provided for in human rights and other applicable international instruments, freely to publish, impart or disseminate to others views, information and knowledge on all human rights and fundamental freedoms*”; and to Article 12 (2): “*The State shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection by the competent authorities of everyone,*

individually and in association with others, against any violence, threats, retaliation, de facto or de jure adverse discrimination, pressure or any other arbitrary action as a consequence of his or her legitimate exercise of the rights referred to in the present declaration.

Please inform us of any actions that may be taken with regard to the above case.

Yours sincerely,



Andrew Anderson

Executive Director