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First UA: 111/23 Index: AFR 60/7500/2023 Burkina Faso of December 8, 2023

## **BURKINA FASO HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDER FORCIBLY DISAPPEARED**

On December 1, human rights defender, Daouda Diallo was abducted by security forces in civilian clothes while he was renewing his passport at the passport office in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso. Daouda Diallo who is secretary general of the Coalition Against Impunity and Community Stigmatization, was taken to an unknown location. Three days later, a picture showing him armed and in military clothes circulated on social media. In early November, Daouda Diallo, along with several other civil society and media figures, including activists, journalists, and unionists, was conscripted by the government. An April 2023 decree on general mobilization to fight armed groups is used by national authorities to sanction and silence civil society members and human rights defenders who publicly criticize the government.

The authorities should stop enforced disappearances, immediately release Daouda Diallo if he is still detained, end using targeted conscription to repress critics and allow anyone to contest conscription orders before independent judicial authorities.

### **Write to President of Burkina Faso urging his government to:**

- Stop enforced disappearances and release Daouda Diallo immediately if he is still detained.
- Be transparent about the conscription process,
- Stop using the April 2023 decree as a threat to independent voices in Burkina Faso and to clarify the ways citizens can contest the legal basis of their conscription.

### **Write to:**

Captain Ibrahim Traoré  
President of Burkina Faso  
03 BP 7027 Ouagadougou 03, Burkina Faso  
Email: [compaore415@hotmail.com](mailto:compaore415@hotmail.com)  
*Salutation: Your Excellency:*

### **And copy:**

Mr. Taba DOYE  
Second Counsellor & Chargé d'affaires, a.i.  
Embassy of Burkina Faso  
48 Range Road  
Ottawa, ON K1N 8J4  
Tel: (613) 238-4796 Fax: (613) 238-3812  
Email: [ambassade.burkina@ambabf-ca.org](mailto:ambassade.burkina@ambabf-ca.org)

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Dr Daouda Diallo is the Secretary General of the Coalition against Impunity and Community Stigmatization (CISC). CISC emerged out of the Yirgou killings of January 2019. At least 43 people were killed during attacks by a 'self-defense' armed group called Koglweogo that has often operated alongside the country's military. The killings sparked a humanitarian crisis in Burkina Faso, driving thousands of survivors to Barsalogho and Kaya for protection. The CISC emerged first as an informal group to respond to the needs of the survivors and calling for justice, before becoming more established.

In 2022, Daouda Diallo was awarded the Martin Ennals Award for human rights defenders.

In April 2023, a decree "on general mobilization and safeguarding" granted the authorities the "right to request people, goods and services, the right to control and allocate supply resources and, to this end, to impose the necessary constraints on individuals or corporate bodies; the right to summon for the sake of national defense, any individual (...)". All Burkinabè aged 18 years and above can now be conscripted if they are physically deemed fit and if the need is expressed by competent authorities.

The decree for national mobilization and safeguarding is being used to repress and silence human rights defenders and journalists and other civil society activists, despite the provisions for contestation when goods and services are requisitioned, or when individuals are mobilized for military service (Article 13).

This repressive tactic against critics has already raised serious concerns prior to the adoption of the decree, regarding forced enrolment into the Volunteers for the Defense of the Homeland (VDPs). VDPs are armed self-defense groups in Burkina Faso created by the government to fight armed groups.

Just a month before its promulgation, Boukaré Ouedraogo, president of the "Appel de Kaya", a civil society organization, was forcibly enrolled as a VDP by the military, despite his visual impairment. A week prior, he had criticized the government for the lack of drinkable water in Kaya, a city in Burkina Faso, and for their poor response to the security situation. In a speech during a visit to Kaya in March 2023, President Traoré alluded to Boukaré Ouedraogo's situation, blamed him for exposing a "vulnerable point" that caused a loss of military lives during attacks, and threatened on the same occasion all Civil Society Organizations members with being forced to join the VDPs in case of public communication seen to be critical of the authorities.

In September 2023, Dr. Arouna Louré, an anesthetist and former member of the National Transitional Council, (an interim legislative body established pursuant to the Transitional Charter) was also conscripted for one month and taken from the hospital he was serving to be deployed. A few days later, photos of him with shaven head and military uniform were published on social media; deploying civilians without their consent and taking pictures of them to disseminate on social media is a tactic that was also used in the case of Boukaré Ouedraogo, who was recorded on video extolling the military regime.

*Please send your appeals until **February 2, 2024**. If there's the need for further action after that date, the UA will be duly updated.*