

# REDRESS

Ending torture, seeking justice for survivors

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

145<sup>th</sup> Session

**The failure of Chad to implement reparation for victims of torture and other  
human rights violations**

2<sup>nd</sup> February 2026

# SUBMISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE REGARDING THE EXAMINATION OF REPARATION FOR VICTIMS OF THE HABRÉ REGIME

## (Shadow Report)

### Presentation

1. **REDRESS** is an international human rights organisation that delivers justice and reparation for survivors of torture, challenges impunity for perpetrators and advocates for legal and policy reforms to combat torture and provide effective reparation. REDRESS works alongside the Association Tchadienne pour la Promotion et Défense des Droits de l'Homme (Tchadienne pour la Promotion et Défense des Droits de l'Homme (ATPDH)) and Chadian lawyers representing the victims of Hissein Habré towards the implementation of reparation. In particular, REDRESS has advocated for the creation of the African Union's (AU) Trust Fund for the victims of Hissein Habré, and is engaged with ATPDH in litigation against Chad before the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (AComHPR) for its failure to provide reparation to the victims.

### Introduction:

2. REDRESS respectfully submits this shadow report as part of the periodic examination by the Human Rights Committee (HRCte) in the framework of its 145<sup>th</sup> session. This submission focuses on the lack of effective and comprehensive reparation for the victims of the Hissein Habré regime, including the lack of implementation of two reparation orders in favour of more of 7,000 victims and survivors of the regime.
3. In November 2023, Chad submitted to the HRCte a periodic report to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) covering the period of 2014 to 2023.<sup>1</sup> The report highlighted progress made by Chad in promoting and protecting certain civil and political rights, and provided information on the domestic implementation of the ICCPR. The list of issues published by the HRCte on 24 April 2025 requested detailed information from the State on the reparation process for the victims of Hissein Habré.<sup>2</sup> Chad's reply failed to provide any information on the effective delivery of compensation, the measures taken to implement the decisions, or the adoption of

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<sup>1</sup> Human Rights Committee (HRCte), *Third periodic report submitted by Chad under article 40 of the Covenant*, (20 November 2023) UN Doc CCPR/C/TCD/3, available at:  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCD%2FTCD%2F3&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCD%2FTCD%2F3&Lang=en).

<sup>2</sup> HRCte, *List of issues in relation to the third periodic report of Chad*, 24 April 2025, CCPR/C/TCD/Q/3, available at:  
[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCD%2FQ%2F3&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCD%2FQ%2F3&Lang=en), para. 3.

comprehensive reparation programmes—including satisfaction, guarantees of non-repetition, and rehabilitation. It also did not address the concerns raised by civil society and victims regarding the lack of transparency, the absence of a clear legal framework, and the discriminatory practices observed in the limited reparation initiatives carried out by the State.<sup>3</sup>

4. The information contained in this shadow report is based on:
  - Open source research;
  - A study conducted in 2022 and 2023 by ATPDH and REDRESS on barriers and opportunities for reparation for conflict-related sexual violence victims, which led to a report titled “Breaking the Silence”;<sup>4</sup>
  - Information collected in Chad by REDRESS and ATPDH in October 2024 through individual meetings with victims, civil society organisations (CSOs), and State authorities concerning the process of disbursement of funds to victim communities initiated by the Chadian Government in 2024 and which led to a briefing paper titled “What Reparations for Hissène Habré’s Victims?”, attached to this shadow report as **Appendix 1**;<sup>5</sup>
  - A research study conducted by the International Rehabilitation Centre for Victims of Torture (IRCT) in N’Djamena (Chad) in 2023 and 2024. This research entailed multiple focus group discussions and individual interviews with direct and indirect victims of torture committed during the Habré regime. It assesses the impact of the lack of implementation of reparation measures on victims. The study is attached to this shadow report as **Appendix 2**.<sup>6</sup>
5. The submission will first analyse the status of implementation of reparation by Chad for Habré era crimes (I), before commenting on a flawed disbursement process initiated in 2024 to some victims (II). The submission then discusses the current status of the victims

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<sup>3</sup> HRCte, *Replies of Chad to the list of issues in relation to its third periodic report*, 23 December 2025, CCPR/C/TCD/RQ/3, available at:

[https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/\\_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCD%2FTRQ%2F3&Lang=en](https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR%2FCD%2FTRQ%2F3&Lang=en), para. 6.

<sup>4</sup> REDRESS, ATPDH, and Global Survivors Fund, *Chad Study on Opportunities for Reparations for Survivors of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence: Breaking the Silence*, April 2023, available at: [https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/GSF\\_Report\\_CHAD\\_EN\\_April2023\\_WEB-1.pdf](https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/GSF_Report_CHAD_EN_April2023_WEB-1.pdf) (Reparation Study).

<sup>5</sup> REDRESS, ‘*What Reparations for Hissène Habré’s Victims?*’, available at: <https://redress.org/storage/2025/01/Hissene-Habre-Reparations-briefing-ENG-3.pdf> (**Appendix 1**).

<sup>6</sup> IRCT, Expert Report in *Abaifouta et al v Chad*, 10 November 2023 (**Appendix 2**).

(III), draws conclusions on Chad's violations of its international obligations (IV), and provides recommendations (V).

**I. The context and the judicial decisions**

6. The Hissein Habré regime (1982-1990) was marked by systematic and persistent human rights violations, targeting opponents, religious, and ethnic groups.<sup>7</sup> The Security and Documentation Directorate (DDS) was the key repressive organ of the Habré regime, which perpetrated, or was otherwise involved in these violations.<sup>8</sup> The DDS was under the control of Habré, the then President of Chad.<sup>9</sup>
7. Among the violations, the regime perpetrated enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture, extrajudicial killings, and sexual violence.<sup>10</sup> Torture was an “institutional practice” within the DDS used both to extract confessions during interrogations and as a systematic tool of repression.<sup>11</sup> Sexual violence was also used as a torture technique against women and men,<sup>12</sup> and as an instrument of terror during raids on villages and localities. Women were particular targets of such violence and of other specific barbaric acts linked to their gender including sexual slavery.<sup>13</sup>
8. These atrocities were eventually investigated and some perpetrators prosecuted at domestic and regional levels, thanks to the activism of victims, their lawyers, and CSOs. Two decisions were adopted:
  - A domestic decision in 2015 by the Criminal Court of N'Djamena against 20 former State agents and the Chadian State (N'Djamena Decision);<sup>14</sup> and

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<sup>7</sup> Chadian Commission of Inquiry into the Crimes and Misappropriations Committed by ex-President Habré, his Accomplices and/or Accessories, Report: Investigation of Crimes against the Physical and Mental Integrity of Persons and their Possessions, 7 May 1992, available at: <https://www.usip.org/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/Chad-Report.pdf> (COI Report).

<sup>8</sup> EAC, Trial Judgment, *Hissène Habré*, Trial Chamber, 30 May 2016, available at: <https://redress.org/storage/2017/04/EAC-Habre-Trial-Judgment-30-May-2016-FR-1.pdf> (EAC Trial Judgment), paras 2150-2156.

<sup>9</sup> COI Report, p. 62.

<sup>10</sup> COI Report, pp. 91, 92.

<sup>11</sup> EAC Trial Judgment, paras 539-555.

<sup>12</sup> EAC Trial Judgment, paras 610-624; Reparation Study, pp. 21-25.

<sup>13</sup> EAC Trial Judgment, para. 821.

<sup>14</sup> Special Criminal Court of N'Djamena, Criminal Judgment, No. 01/15, 25 March 2015, available at: [https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/ARRETCRIMINEL Tchad Complet 25.03.2015.pdf](https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/ARRETCRIMINEL_Tchad_Complet_25.03.2015.pdf) (N'Djamena Decision).

- A regional (appeal) decision in 2017 by a hybrid court, the Extraordinary African Chambers (EAC) in Dakar (Senegal), against Hissein Habré (EAC Appeal Judgment).<sup>15</sup>
9. Both decisions awarded compensation for around 7,000 victims of the regime. The N'Djamena Decision also awarded satisfaction measures, and further investigations into the crimes.<sup>16</sup> The Chadian government has failed to take proper steps to ensure the implementation of the reparation called for in the N'Djamena Decision, to cooperate with the AU towards the operationalisation of the Trust fund, and to comply with its international responsibility to repair the violations suffered by the victims of the Habré regime. The convicted individuals have now dissipated their assets, and Hissein Habré has died; the EAC award was left unimplemented by the AU, its designated implementing body. This does not absolve Chad of its international legal obligation to provide reparation to the victims.

### The N'Djamena Judgment

10. In 2015, the Special Criminal Court of N'Djamena convicted twenty officers of the DDS, for torture, arbitrary detention, murder, and other serious crimes.<sup>17</sup> The judgment held Chad responsible *in solidum* for the acts of the security agents and ordered the convicted perpetrators and government to each pay half of the reparation award.<sup>18</sup> The Court awarded, among others:
- Damages of 75 billion CFA francs (125 million USD), jointly and in equal shares with the Chadian State. Compensation to the victims was to be allocated “according to the degree of the damage actually suffered”;
  - The establishment by the Prime Minister of an Implementation Commission to facilitate the payment of this award;
  - Continuation of the investigations;
  - The construction of a memorial on the site of “Amral Goz” – a killing site –, within one year of the judgment; and
  - The conversion of the DDS headquarters into a museum.<sup>19</sup>
11. The compensation was never disbursed, the investigations were not continued, and the sites of Amral Goz and the DDS headquarters never underwent any transformation for the purpose of reparation. Chad has failed to recover the balance attributed by the decision to the convicted individuals, for the past ten years. This has led to the likely

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<sup>15</sup> Extraordinary African Chambers, Judgment, *Hissène Habré* case, Appeals Chamber, 27 April 2017, available at: [https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/EAC-Appeal-Judgement\\_Chad-Hissene-Habre-case.pdf](https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/EAC-Appeal-Judgement_Chad-Hissene-Habre-case.pdf) (EAC Appeal Judgment), confirming: EAC Trial Judgment.

<sup>16</sup> N'Djamena Decision, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> N'Djamena Decision, pp. 11-13.

<sup>18</sup> N'Djamena Decision, pp. 11-13.

<sup>19</sup> N'Djamena Decision, pp. 11-13.

dissipation of their assets by these individuals. Meanwhile, the personal situation of the victims has worsened, and their harm has increased.<sup>20</sup>

12. Satisfaction measures aim to restore the dignity of the victims, and to acknowledge their suffering. The erection of the memorial on Amral Goz and the transformation of the DDS into a museum have particular significance for the victims, as they relate to the main crime sites that constituted the geographical scope of the N'Djamena Decision: the DDS was the site where victims were arbitrarily imprisoned and tortured, and Amral Goz, also known as Hamral-Goz or "Plain of the Dead", was the location where mass graves were used by the DDS officials to dispose of the bodies of deceased and executed persons.<sup>21</sup>
13. In January 2025, the Chadian authorities razed the DDS building, situated on the presidential palace perimeter, leaving only the "Piscine", where the main imprisonment and torture centre was located.<sup>22</sup> Clément Abaïfouta, a victim leader in the cases, subsequently called on the Chadian President to stop the destruction, and begin its transformation into a museum.<sup>23</sup>
14. Both satisfaction measures should be co-created with the victims, and the process handled with the utmost care, according to the do-no-harm and non-discrimination principles, and following a survivor-centred approach. This could be a task for an Implementation Commission to take on in close consultation with individual victims, the *Bureau des victimes*, the victims' legal representatives, national and international NGOs, and ministerial units. Any final decision on implementation of the satisfaction measures as ordered in the N'Djamena Decision needs to be collaboratively reached, transparent, and adequately communicated with the victims, regardless of their location, level of literacy, or language. Given the delay already incurred by Chad in the implementation of these measures, as well as the age of many victims, the actions mentioned should be taken urgently to be effective.

#### The EAC Judgments:

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<sup>20</sup> Appendix 2.

<sup>21</sup> Human Rights Watch, "The Plain of the Dead: The Chad of Hissène Habré (1982-1990)", 2013, available at [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/chad1013frwebwcover\\_0.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/chad1013frwebwcover_0.pdf), pp. 318 and 679.

<sup>22</sup> RFI, "Au Tchad, le siège de la DDS rasé, la "piscine" d'Hissène Habré encore présente", 6 January 2024, available at: <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20240105-au-tchad-la-piscine-d-hiss%C3%A8ne-habr%C3%A9-finalement-ras%C3%A9e>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

15. In 2012, the EAC were established in Senegal, to try crimes committed in Chad under Habré's rule.<sup>24</sup> In 2017, the EAC adopted its final decision finding Habré responsible for serious international crimes including crimes against humanity, and upheld and ordered compensation.<sup>25</sup>
16. Although the Trust Fund was established by the AU in 2018 and Habré's villa and bank accounts in Senegal were seized, none of his assets have been liquidated, and Chad has not demonstrated a strong level of cooperation to ensure the effective implementation of the EAC Appeal Judgment.<sup>26</sup> For example, Chad has not taken any action to identify additional assets in the form of shares in business or accounts held in other people's names.<sup>27</sup>
17. In 2021, Habré's death sparked renewed interest in the right to reparation for the victims and the AU sent a delegation to Chad to take possession of a building for the Trust Fund. Although this act was perceived as promising initially, by 2022 there remained no follow-up action to begin the process of distributing funds to victims through the Trust Fund.<sup>28</sup> The building is now host to another organisation, unrelated to the Trust Fund. The fact that the AU never operationalised the Trust Fund despite some mild efforts by Chad to encourage it, does not absolve Chad of its own responsibility to provide reparation to victims, and to collaborate towards the implementation of the EAC Appeal Judgment.

## **II. A flawed process of distribution of money to victims in 2024**

18. In September 2022, the Chadian Transitional President announced that he would make 10 billion CFA francs (17.4 million USD) available to the victims of Habré.<sup>29</sup> According to the government, this was meant to represent Chad's "share" of the reparation according to the EAC Appeal Judgment.<sup>30</sup> The presidency also claimed that victims' associations had "humbly asked the President of the Republic to rehabilitate" Hissein

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<sup>24</sup> Accord entre le Gouvernement de la République du Sénégal et l'Union africaine sur la création de Chambres africaines extraordinaires au sein des juridictions sénégalaises, 22 août 2012, available at: <https://www.chambresafricaines.org/pdf/Accord%20UA-Senegal%20Chambres%20africaines%20extra%20Aout%202012.pdf>.

<sup>25</sup> EAC Appeal Judgment, pp. 225 and 226.

<sup>26</sup> Reparation Study, p. 57.

<sup>27</sup> Reparation Study, p. 57.

<sup>28</sup> International Commission of Jurists, 'Chad: No Reparations for Ex-President's Victims Six Years After Conviction', 27 May 2022, available at: <https://www.icj.org/chad-no-reparations-for-ex-presidents-victims-six-years-after-conviction/> (ICJ Article).

<sup>29</sup> Letter by the Chadian Government to the Board of Directors of the Fund for the Compensation of Victims, September 2022, available at: [https://www.justiceinfo.net/wp-content/uploads/Tchad\\_disposition-fonds-indemnisation-victimes-Habre\\_@Union-Africaine.jpg](https://www.justiceinfo.net/wp-content/uploads/Tchad_disposition-fonds-indemnisation-victimes-Habre_@Union-Africaine.jpg).  
[https://redress.org/storage/2025/01/Hissene-Habre-Reparations-briefing-ENG-3.pdf?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://redress.org/storage/2025/01/Hissene-Habre-Reparations-briefing-ENG-3.pdf?utm_source=chatgpt.com)

<sup>30</sup> Appendix 1, p. 3.

Habré.<sup>31</sup> The Transitional President did not mention the N'Djamena Decision or Chad's obligation to provide full reparation.

19. After consultations with the victims' associations, the Ministry decided to distribute the funds based on the list of accepted civil parties (participating victims) established by the EAC Appeal Judgment.<sup>32</sup> The disbursement process started in February 2024.<sup>33</sup> The total amount of 10 billion CFA francs was divided equally among all victims, without differentiation based on victim status, type of violation, or severity of harm. A Bank was appointed to carry out the payments, which were made in cash due to the cost of bank transfers. Each victim was to receive 925,241 CFA francs (approximately USD 1,420), excluding bank fees. No official public information on the distribution process was made available.<sup>34</sup> This amount represents less than the 6% of the awarded compensation.
20. In October 2024, victims and other actors shared with REDRESS and ATPDH several shortcomings of the process as it failed to follow either of the judgments, gave room for corrupt practices, allowed for discrimination and unfairness in distribution, and provided no recourse for victims excluded from the process. The legal basis for distribution also remains unclear.<sup>35</sup> No additional payments appear to have been made to victims since early 2025. Although government officials were approached about these concerns in 2024, they remained elusive about the process and failed to provide a legal basis for their actions.<sup>36</sup>
21. At government level, there are still no discussions on the development of a full and fair reparation process, abiding by the judgments.

### **III. The current status of victims of the Habré Regime**

22. The IRCT study (Appendix 2) revealed that the harm endured by the victims of the Habré regime has been exponentially compounded overtime by the lack of proper reparation.<sup>37</sup> As a result of the crimes, most of the victims suffered severe physical and psychological injuries,<sup>38</sup> as well as economic distress increased by a lack of resources and stigmatisation.<sup>39</sup> Some victims are still unable to access proper medical care or seek employment due to their status as victims.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Appendix 1, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> Appendix 1, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> ICJ Article; Appendix 1, p. 1.

<sup>34</sup> Appendix 1, p. 1.

<sup>35</sup> Appendix 1, p. 4.

<sup>36</sup> Appendix 1, pp. 4-5.

<sup>37</sup> Appendix 2, p. 31.

<sup>38</sup> Appendix 2, pp. 22-31.

<sup>39</sup> Appendix 2, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Appendix 2, p. 32.



23. When the decisions were issued in 2015 and 2017, victims perceived this as a recognition of their suffering and an opportunity to end decades of struggle.<sup>41</sup>

*"All the victims were hoping to have their dignity restored and to the possibility to finally afford medical care, proper housing and schooling for themselves and their children or grandchildren".<sup>42</sup>*

24. Many subsequently felt frustrated and fatigued, because of the crimes followed by denial of reparation.<sup>43</sup> They felt unable to build a new life and heal.<sup>44</sup> This impact spans the thousands harmed during the regime, and multiple generations since the fall of the regime.<sup>45</sup>

25. In the conclusions to Appendix 2, IRCT noted:

"All the victims-plaintiffs are in dire need of medical care, including psychological support, which they cannot afford due to the cost of the service. They all share their desire to own a property where they can rebuild their life and where their children can grow. Schooling is another basic need highlighted by the interviewees. Compensation cannot remove the wounds but may act as a key step towards the rehabilitation process of the victims-plaintiffs, their families and influence the whole society, healing massive and historical trauma and paving the path for broader reparations. In addition to the compensation measure, perceived by the totality of the interviewees as the primary act to be implemented by the authorities, the victims-plaintiffs also stressed the need to implement the erection of the commemorative monument for all the victims of the Habré's regime, as well as the transformation of the former DDS headquarters into a museum, which were both also ordered by the court in 2015."<sup>46</sup>

#### **IV. Chad's breach of its obligation to provide effective remedies and reparation**

26. Article 2 of the ICCPR provides for victims' rights to an effective remedy, and General Comment 31 to the ICCPR requires that States Parties provide reparation to individuals whose Covenant rights have been violated.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Appendix 2, p. 18.

<sup>42</sup> Appendix 2, p. 18.

<sup>43</sup> Appendix 2, p. 18.

<sup>44</sup> Appendix 2, p. 32.

<sup>45</sup> Appendix 2, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> Appendix 2, p. 32.

<sup>47</sup> HRCt, General Comment No. 31 [80], *The nature of the general legal obligation imposed on States Parties to the Covenant*, CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.13, 26 May 2004, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/legal/general/hrc/2004/en/52451> (GC31), para. 3.

27. An integral part of the right to an effective remedy is the provision of reparation for the violation. While the prosecution and punishment of perpetrators is important, it does not constitute an effective remedy when it is not accompanied by reparation for the victims.<sup>48</sup> As the HRCt has recognised, “[w]ithout reparation to individuals whose [...] rights have been violated, the obligation to provide an effective remedy [...] is not discharged.”<sup>49</sup> The HRCt considers that such reparation can include compensation, rehabilitation, satisfaction, such as public apologies and memorials, and guarantees of non-repetition.<sup>50</sup> Further, States retain the obligation to ensure reparation even when the perpetrators are unable or unwilling to meet their obligations.<sup>51</sup>
28. Chad is consequently under the obligation to ensure reparation for the victims of the regime. The N’Djamena Decision was legally granted by a legitimate court, and the Chadian authorities should implement it fully. Chad should also collaborate with the AU towards the full implementation of the EAC Appeal Judgment. The insolvency of the convicted individuals, the dissipation and devaluation of assets, and the AU’s failure to implement the EAC Appeal Judgment do not absolve Chad of its own obligation to provide reparation to Habré’s victims.

## **V. Conclusion and recommendations**

29. Chad’s persistent failure to provide reparation per its international legal obligations for Habré era violations and crimes has left thousands of victims indigent and compounded in harm. This has given rise to additional violations by Chad of its obligation to repair under international law. REDRESS respectfully requests that the HRCt adopts the following recommendations to Chad in its concluding observations:
30. The Government should comply with its international obligation to provide full and effective reparation to the victims of the Habré Regime by:
  1. Making reparation a priority, and taking concrete steps towards it;
  2. Clarifying any progress in implementing the N’Djamena Decision and the implementation of the reparation ordered;
  3. Immediately enforcing the N’Djamena Decision, through:

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<sup>48</sup> Expert Report of Professor Luke Moffett on the right to reparation for gross violations of human rights, 8 November 2023, available at: [https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/2023.11.08-Abaifouta-et-al-v-Chad\\_Moffett-Expert-Report\\_FINAL-SIGNED.pdf](https://redress.org/storage/2026/01/2023.11.08-Abaifouta-et-al-v-Chad_Moffett-Expert-Report_FINAL-SIGNED.pdf), para. 10.

<sup>49</sup> GC31, para. 16.

<sup>50</sup> GC31, para. 16; see also: UN General Assembly, UN Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law - Resolution 60/147, 15 December 2005, available at <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/basic-principles-and-guidelines-right-remedy-and-reparation> (Basic Principles and Guidelines), Principles 18 and 20.

<sup>51</sup> Basic Principles and Guidelines, Principle 16.

- a. Establishing an interministerial working group to design and carry out a comprehensive reparation plan in close collaboration with victims' representatives and civil society;
  - b. Operationalising the Implementation Commission provided for in the N'Djamena Decision, according to international standards, and clarifying its complementarity with the AU Trust Fund;
  - c. Releasing and allocating all funds owed under the N'Djamena Decision;
  - d. Initiating asset-recovery efforts against convicted officials;
  - e. In consultation with victims' representatives and with their full participation, erecting a monument in Amral Goz in memory of the survivors and victims of the Habré regime and convert the former DDS headquarters into a museum; and
  - f. Continuing to investigate the Habré era crimes;
4. Establishing a rehabilitation programme to ensure that the main physical and psychosocial needs of the victims are addressed according to international human rights standards, including:
  - a. Assessing individual and collective physical and psychosocial needs of the victims;
  - b. Designing comprehensive, long-term, holistic, and comprehensive rehabilitation services encompassing medical, psychosocial, and reproductive care to the victims;
5. Cooperating with the AU in order to fully operationalise the Trust Fund provided for in the EAC Judgments;
6. Establishing an ongoing dialogue with:
  - a. The AU in order to advance the operationalisation of the Trust Fund;
  - b. Relevant Senegalese ministries to establish advocacy synergy with the AU, liquidate Hissène Habré's frozen assets to feed the Trust Fund, and explore the search for other recoverable assets; and
  - c. Relevant foreign representatives to discuss their possible financial contributions to reparation; and
7. On the process of disbursement of the "compensation":
  - a. Clarifying the basis and legal framework for the process of disbursement;
  - b. Drawing up and keeping a list of the victims who received a first amount, the amounts paid individually and totally, and the legal basis for the amounts paid; avoid any levy, including bank fees, on the amounts paid in reparation, whether interim, partial or definitive reparation measures; and
  - c. Investigating any allegations of discriminatory, exclusive, or corrupt practices in the payment process and, where appropriate, initiate criminal proceedings against the actors concerned.

## **Appendixes:**

**Appendix 1.** REDRESS, '*What Reparations for Hissène Habré's Victims?*', January 2025.

**Appendix 2.** International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, *Expert Report in Abaïfouta et al v Chad*, 10 November 2023.

## BRIEFING PAPER: WHAT REPARATIONS FOR HISSÈNE HABRÉ'S VICTIMS?

**"It's better than nothing, but it's not enough"**

**JANUARY 2025**

Since February 2024, the Chadian government has been engaged in a process of compensation for victims of the regime of former dictator Hissène Habré. The Director of the Office of the President of the Transition, Mahamat Idriss Déby, [announced](#) in September 2022 in a letter that he was making ten billion CFA francs (USD 17.4 million) available to the victims, "as part of the contribution of the Republic of Chad [to] the Fund for the Compensation of Victims of the Regime of Hissène Habré" which was to be created by the African Union (AU). Seventeen months later, this money began to be distributed directly by the Chadian government to the victims, without the involvement of the AU.

This compensation process is part of a complex legal and State environment, against the backdrop of a political upheaval, in which two reparation decisions obtained by more than 7,000 victims in 2015 and 2017 in [N'Djamena](#) and [Dakar](#) have yet to be executed.

The many victims of Hissène Habré's regime have been calling for reparation for years. The violations were committed in the 1980s and constitute serious international crimes (torture, sexual and gender-based crimes, war crimes, and crimes against humanity). Many of these victims have died since the decisions, and the lack of reparation has greatly aggravated the damage suffered by others.

In spite of the urgent needs of the victims, the reparation process continues to drag on without resolution. The amount made available by the government represents around 10% of the total amount owed to the victims. No action has been taken to recover the assets of the convicted persons, nor to raise funds to reach the total amount. The process is being carried out outside the legal frameworks provided for in the two decisions and lacks transparency. Victims consulted in October 2024 in N'Djamena told the Chadian Associations for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights (Association Tchadienne pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l'Homme -ATPDH) and REDRESS about a lack of controls, and sometimes insurmountable difficulties, in obtaining the compensation.

This briefing briefly describes the (1) context, (2) the reparation process and its obstacles, (3) and proposes recommendations to allow for full and adequate reparation for the victims of the Habré regime.

The information presented in this paper was collected during a series of informal consultations conducted by ATPDH and REDRESS with victims, victims' lawyers, victims' associations, NGOs, government actors, and foreign delegations in N'Djamena in October 2024. They also draw on our 2023 study on reparation options for victims of conflict-related sexual violence, ["Breaking the Silence"](#).

## THE REPARATION DECISIONS

In 2015, the Criminal Court of N'Djamena sentenced 20 officers of the Directorate of Documentation and Security (DDS), Hissène Habré's political police, to prison for torture, arbitrary detention, murder and other serious violations (N'Djamena judgment). The Court ordered them to provide reparation to the civil parties (victims), jointly with the Chadian State. The court ordered, inter alia:

- damages of 75 billion CFA francs (125 million USD), jointly and in equal shares with the Chadian State;
- the establishment by the Prime Minister of an Implementation Commission to facilitate the payment of this award;
- the construction of a memorial on the site of "Amral Goz", within one year of the judgment; and
- the conversion of the DDS headquarters into a museum.

In 2017, the Extraordinary African Chambers (EAC), a hybrid court established in Dakar by the Senegalese government and the AU, upheld on appeal the sentence of Hissène Habré to life imprisonment for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including torture and sexual violence (Dakar judgment). The EAC also ordered compensation for the victims:

- damages of 82 billion CFA francs (approximately 130 million USD) to 7,396 named victims (20 million CFA francs for each victim of rape and sexual slavery, 15 million CFA francs for each victim of arbitrary detention, torture and other inhuman treatment and survivors of massacres, and 10 million CFA francs for each indirect victim);
- the creation by the AU of a Trust Fund for the benefit of victims with the task of organising the seizure and liquidation of Hissène Habré's assets, raising funds for the Trust Fund, and distributing the amounts to the victims.

The Implementation Commission provided for in the N'Djamena judgment was never created by the Chadian Prime Minister. The museum and memorial were not built. In 2024, the DDS headquarters, located within the perimeter of the presidential palace, [was razed](#), leaving only the "Piscine", the most notorious political prison under Habré, intact. Compensation was never paid.

The AU published the statute of the Trust Fund in 2018 and allocated five million USD to the Fund. In Dakar, Hissène Habré's villa and two of his bank accounts, seized by the EAC, were never liquidated. Hissène Habré himself died on 24 August 2021.

On 15 September 2021, following Habré's death and renewed international interest in the plight of victims, the AU sent a delegation to Chad, where it took possession of a building for the Fund, which it described as "a watershed moment in the reparations process" for

victims. An AU official said the AU commission was working “to make the fund operational as soon as possible”. It took almost a year for a second AU delegation to arrive in August 2022 to “set up the provisional secretariat of the fund, [...] establish a work plan and set out the modalities of the reparation process.” But the delegation left Chad without having done so. The Fund was not subsequently operationalised, and according to information received by ATPDH and REDRESS in October 2024, the building has now been assigned to another organisation, unrelated to reparation.

In the [context](#) of the seizure of power by Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno following the death of Idriss Déby Itno, and of the “transition”, the transitional Prime Minister defined a roadmap with three strategic axes, including organising dialogue and consolidating peace and national unity.

On the eve of the June 2024 presidential elections, and following a sustained advocacy campaign for the delivery of compensation by victims’ associations, President Déby met with three victims’ associations (Association of Victims of the Crimes of the Hissène Habré Regime (AVCRHH), Association of Victims of Political Crimes and Repression in Chad (AVCRP), and Network of Human Rights Associations in Chad (RADHT)) in February 2024. During this meeting, the President announced the compensation mentioned in the September 2022 letter. According to the government, this represents Chad’s “share” of the reparation. The presidency also claimed that victims’ associations had “humbly asked the President of the Republic to rehabilitate” Hissène Habré.

## THE PAYMENT PROCESS BEGINS

The compensation announced in September 2022 was allocated in September 2023 by the treasury of the Ministry of Finance and Budget, which had been designated by the President of the Republic to organise the distribution of the amounts. After discussion with victims’ associations, the Ministry decided to proceed with the distribution based on the list of civil parties drawn up by the EAC in Dakar and whose applications were accepted. According to the information collected, the amount of 10 billion CFA francs was simply divided by the number of victims, without taking into account their status (direct or indirect victim), the type of violation suffered, or the seriousness of the damage. The Ministry designated the ORA Bank to make the payments. Payments were made in cash, as the transfer option was deemed too expensive. In concrete terms, according to the actors consulted, each victim is supposed to receive 925,241 CFA francs (1,420 USD), excluding bank fees. No official public information on the process is available.

Each victims’ association has drawn up a list of its members appearing on the CAE judgment. The lists shall be made available to victims at the headquarters of the relevant association. The victims travel, identify their name on the list, and show their proof of identity, and if applicable, power of attorney, deed of notoriety, title of succession, or heredity.

On this basis, a list of victims who have come forward and been recognised by the association is sent to the Director of Debt within the Ministry of Finance, together with a copy of the

documents supporting the application (in theory one per month and per association). The Debt Directorate conducts an audit and then sends the list to the Paymaster-General. Each list is then sent back to the victims' associations. The victims are then contacted by the associations and can go individually to the bank to withdraw the amount due to them, upon presentation of their identity documents, and against a payment slip. Once the amount is given, the lists are updated to reflect the payment. In the provinces, the provincial units of the AVCRHH centralize the process, and payments appear to be made by the provincial branches of the ORABank. The number of victims who received the amount is not disclosed by the actors involved, nor is it made public.

This process suffers from [many shortcomings](#): it is not part of the processes provided for in the two judgments; it leaves room for discriminatory and potentially fraudulent manoeuvres; and it leaves no recourse to victims who find themselves excluded.

## OBSTACLES FACED BY VICTIMS

The Lead Lawyer for Victims, Jacqueline Moudeina, deplores the total lack of consultation with the victims' legal representatives in this payment process. However, she began a census of the victims, in order to compensate for the errors of the Dakar judgment, and in anticipation of the distribution of compensation.

She also questions the legal basis for making the 10 billion available: "Is it an interim measure in the name of the transition, before the full amounts are allocated, or is it a clumsy start to the execution of the N'Djamena judgment?" Despite the address of the September 2022 letter, she categorically excludes reparation on the basis of the Dakar judgment, which she says must be carried out through the AU Trust Fund, for which she has worked jointly with ATPDH and REDRESS on a [model procedural settlement](#).

The victims consulted expressed their feelings and told us of the barriers they face. Those who received the amount voiced their disappointment with the amount received: "Y... told us "I was able to buy three bags of rice, some condiments for the house (...) and clothes for my family. I expect real compensation. "A... agrees and recounts: " "I bought rice, oil for my house, I gave money to my children. I also shared the money with my brothers. They are also victims, but they have not had their share. It's a small relief, but I see the fate of my brothers and I'm sad. "K... ", a direct victim, expressed that "what I have been given does not bring me anything. I'm sick and I can't even get medical treatment."

In the absence of consolidated lists and/or discussions within the frameworks provided, some victims who have been recognised in the Dakar judgment are still denied access to the compensation.

The administrators of the victims' associations explain the difficulties they faced during the process. They first posted the lists of victims in the premises of the associations, in order to facilitate the identification of the victims, and to allow a level of transparency. However, they discovered that third parties took photos of the lists and impersonated victims in order to collect the amount for them. One of administrators assured that he had taken measures to ensure that victims received the amount due to them. The lists were later removed to



mitigate the risks, but this solution is not viable either. These problems are largely due to the lack of an appropriate framework for distributing the money.

All have criticised the slowness of the process, and the fact that the government now seems to have “liquidity problems” that do not allow to continue payments. They also affirm that the amount represents only a small part of the compensation due, thus a simple start to the execution of fuller reparation, or an interim compensation.

The government actors approached remain reserved about the legal basis of the process. They say there is political will for reparation. They call for an inter-ministerial approach in order to bring together the relevant actors for each aspect of the process: the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Finance; the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for coordination with the AU; and the Ministry of Territorial Planning and the City of N’Djamena for the symbolic reparation (which they admit are complicated due to the situation of the former DDS and the “Piscine” prison in the presidential perimeter). They voiced their openness to dialogue.

## NEXT STEPS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The wounds caused to Hissène Habré’s victims are deep and irreversible. Delays in justice and reparation contribute to deepening these wounds. A judicial battle does not end with court decisions. The process of implementation should not nullify the successes but should instead facilitate the rehabilitation of victims and address the root causes of the crimes.

The interim process described in this document has raised the expectations of victims and has demonstrated that when the political will is present, government actors and civil society are able to work together. It is urgent for Chadian and regional actors to unite in the implementation of a transparent, holistic and comprehensive reparation process.

We make the following recommendations to the Chadian government:

- a) On the implementation of the N’Djamena and Dakar judgments:
  - i. make reparation a political priority, and take concrete steps towards it;
  - ii. clarify any progress in implementing the N’Djamena judgment and the implementation of the reparation ordered; and in order to support and facilitate the execution of the Dakar judgment; Débloquer et allouer la totalité des montants dus selon l’arrêt de N’Djamena, et engager un processus de recouvrement des avoirs à l’encontre des agents condamnés ;
  - iii. establish an inter-ministerial working group to develop a plan for the implementation of all reparation measures provided for in the N’Djamena judgment, in dialogue with victims’ lawyers, civil society organisations, and victims’ associations; operationalise the Implementation Commission provided for in the N’Djamena judgment, according to international standards, and clarify its complementarity with the AU Trust Fund;
  - iv. release and allocate all amounts due in accordance with the N’Djamena judgment, and initiate a process of asset recovery from the convicted officials;
  - v. establish an ongoing dialogue with: the AU in order to advance the operationalisation

of the Trust Fund provided for by the Dakar Judgment; relevant Senegalese ministries to establish advocacy synergy with the AU, liquidate Hissène Habré's frozen assets to feed the Trust Fund, and explore the search for other recoverable assets; relevant foreign representatives to discuss their possible financial contributions to reparation.

- b) On the process of disbursement of the "compensation":
  - i. clarify the basis and legal framework for the process of disbursement of "compensation"; draw up and keep a list of the victims who received a first amount, the amounts paid individually and totally, and the legal basis for the amounts paid; avoid any levy, including bank fees, on the amounts paid in reparation, whether interim, partial or definitive reparation measures; and
  - ii. investigate any allegations of discriminatory, exclusive, or corrupt practices in the payment process and, where appropriate, initiate criminal proceedings against the actors concerned.

Recommendations to the AU, given the AU theme for the year 2025 on "[Justice for Africans and People of African Descent through Reparations](#)":

- a) Establish a dialogue with the Chadian and Senegalese governments, victims' lawyers, civil society associations, and victims' associations in order to operationalise and contribute to the Trust Fund;
- b) adopt rules of procedure for the Trust Fund, aligned with the highest international standards on reparation, focused on victims and aiming at independence, efficiency, transparency, impartiality, non-discrimination, and confidentiality;
- c) ensure that the Trust Fund applies best practices when identifying victims, including the provisions of the AU [Transitional Justice Policy](#) on reparation and the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights' [General Comment No. 4](#) on the right to reparation for victims of torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment;
  - i. ensure that the Trust Fund applies a gender-responsive, victim-centred and intersectional methodology when deciding how to disburse compensation;
  - ii. ensure, in its rules of procedure, that the Trust Fund is aware of the reality in Chad (lack of bank accounts, difficulties in accessing certain territories, stigmatization, and others), the different situations of victims, and the financial and capacity limitations of local actors; and
  - iii. ensure that the Trust Fund is independent.

Recommendations to civil society organisations and victims' associations involved in the implementation of reparation:

- a) ensure that all victims are accompanied in the reparation process, and adopt practices based on transparency, equality, respect and non-discrimination in this work;
- b) to the extent possible, give priority, in the application of reparation and interim measures, to victims who belong to groups in particular situations of vulnerability;
- c) maintain a list of victims who have received amounts in a manner that respects their rights, and for archiving and auditing purposes;

- d) refrain from asking or demanding any fees, contributions, voluntary or not, from the victims, in the process of making compensation available, interim or definitive;
- e) deal with any challenge from disappointed or excluded victims in a fair and transparent manner, respecting their human rights and dignity;
- f) develop a joint advocacy plan, focused on victims and involving victims' lawyers, with the Chadian government and the AU, to push for and support the operationalisation of the Implementation Commission and the Trust Fund; and
- g) reflect financial and organisational resources and needs in a concerted and transparent manner, in order to ensure the sustainability of the commitment, and to avoid any risk of negative repercussions on to victims.

#### Recommendations to the international community:

- a) relay and support the recommendations and messages proposed by this advocacy document;
- b) support the AU and the Chadian government to establish reparation measures, contribute funds, and cooperate as appropriate;
- c) provide technical and financial support, in the short and medium term, to civil society actors involved in reparation processes;
- d) support the AU in calling for an international donors' conference to discuss and contribute to the financing of the Trust Fund based on progress and the actual implementation of reparation for victims; and
- a) provide the Trust Fund with technical advice and resources to locate and seize any other assets that Hissène Habré may have held outside Chad.

**Expert opinion on the assessment of the non-implementation of the 25 March 2015 decision from the Special Criminal Court of N'Djamena, Republic of Chad, in the case Clément Abaïfouta and 6,999 others v. the Republic of Chad**

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## 1. Introduction

The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT), upon the request of the REDRESS Trust and the Association Tchadienne pour la Promotion et la Défense des Droits de l’Homme (ATPDH – Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defence of Human Rights), has conducted an expert report to assess the impact of the non-implementation of the reparation decision of 2015 [Clément Abaïfouta and 6,999 others v the Republic of Chad] on the survivors of the Habré regime in Chad.

The aim of the study is to evaluate how the failure to implement the reparations awarded by the Court in 2015 to the 7,000 plaintiffs, is affecting the life of the survivors’ of the Habré regime as well as that of their family members and relatives.

This study was conducted over six days in October 2023 in the Chadian capital, N’Djamena, involving a large forum, multiple focus groups and individual interviews with victims-plaintiffs who were direct and indirect survivors of torture, as well as SGBV (Sexual and Gender Based Violence) survivors. We explored various dimensions including physical and mental health, financial situation, social stigma, family consequences including children, and how implementation of reparations at this point would impact their lives.

## 2. Background on Habre’s regime (1982-1990) and the 2015 Court decision

Under the rule of Hissein Habré (from 1982 to 1990), Chad experienced widespread atrocities, including political killings, systematic torture, arbitrary arrests, the targeting of particular ethnic groups, and incidents of severe sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In 1992, a special Commission of Inquiry<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Crimes and Misappropriations committed by Ex-President Habré, his Accomplices and/or Accessories;  
<https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/file/resources/collections/commissions/Chad-Report.pdf>

accused Hissein Habré's government of systematic torture and estimated that 40,000 people died during his rule in the country and 80,000 became orphans, 30,000 were widowed, and more than 200,000 people were left without moral or material support. The fate of those killed was often hidden, so that even today, many families still do not know where their loved ones were buried, and survivors are still living with permanent physical and psychological reminders of their ordeal.

On 25 October 2000, victims filed the first complaints in front of the national jurisdiction against security agents of the *Direction de la Documentation et de la Sécurité* (DDS-Directorate for documentation and security). While the process was continuously delayed, more and more victims-plaintiffs joined the proceedings until 7,000 people constituted themselves as civil parties before the Special Criminal Court established in N'Djamena. In its judgment dated 25 March 2015, the Special Criminal Court found 20 DDS agents guilty of crimes including murder, acts of torture and barbarism, unlawful confinement, unlawful and arbitrary detention, intentional and lethal physical assault, cruel treatment and complicity.

The 2015 Decision marked a significant step towards justice and accountability for the atrocities committed during Habré's regime. The scope of the trial encompassed a wide range of human rights abuses, such as torture, sexual violence and trafficking, extrajudicial killings, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, shedding light on the systematic and brutal nature of the oppression during Habré's rule. As part of the decision, the court awarded monetary reparations to the amount of 75,000,000,000 CFA francs (approximately \$125 million) to the 7,000 civil parties, in addition to (amongst other things) the erection of a monument to honor the ones killed by the regime and the creation of a museum in the former headquarters of the DDS. The convicted perpetrators were ordered to pay 50% of the compensation, with the remaining 50% to be borne by the Chadian State. Compensation to the victims was to be allocated "according to the degree of the damage actually suffered."





### 3. About the author

**The International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT)** <https://irct.org/>

IRCT is a global network of civil society organisations and independent experts who support survivors of torture to heal and rebuild their lives through rehabilitation, including medical, psychological, legal and social support. An important part of IRCT's investigation and documentation work is done in collaboration with the Independent Forensic Expert Group (IFEG), established in 2012 as an international hub of preeminent forensic specialists in the medico-legal evaluation of torture.

#### 4. Study Methodology

The Association tchadienne pour la promotion et la défense des droits de l'Homme (ATPDH) and REDRESS provided logistical support for the mission which led to this expert report.

This study employed a mixed-method approach, using a qualitative method to gather comprehensive data on the impact of the non-implementation of the 2015 reparations decision. This methodology was selected to ensure a deep understanding of the survivors' experiences and the broader socio-political implications in Chad.

The data collection strategies were structured to allow for an immersive engagement with the participants, and to ensure that the findings were grounded in their lived experiences. With the logistical support of the ATPDH and REDRESS, the IRCT conducted in-person consultations in N'Djamena from 12th to 15th October 2023.

The research study began with a stakeholders' forum in N'Djamena on 12th October 2023 with the participation of 250 participants to engage with a broader spectrum of survivors, legal experts, human rights advocates, and community leaders, to understand the macro-level impacts and the systemic challenges in the non-implementation of reparations. The stakeholders' forum was followed by discussions in smaller focus groups of plaintiffs, all previously civil parties in the case *Clément Abaïfouta and 6,999 others v the Republic of Chad*, to foster a communal environment where select victims-plaintiffs could share their experiences, reactions to the reparations decision, and the challenges faced due to its non-implementation. Participants to the stakeholders' forum and interviewees of the focus groups were selected in advance by the ATPDH.

Pre-selected participants were divided into three groups of fifteen victims-plaintiffs for each group (for a total of forty-five plaintiffs) based on their gender, age, and the nature of human rights abuses they experienced. Concurrent focus group discussions were held accordingly. Moderated discussions were conducted, guided by a set of predetermined questions while allowing for spontaneous discussion and sharing. The focus groups were composed as follows:

- **Group 1:** Fifteen direct survivors of the Habré regime (mixed group of eight men and seven women)
- **Group 2:** Fifteen widowed women, whose husbands were killed by Habré's henchmen (two women were torture survivors themselves)
- **Group 3:** Fifteen victims-plaintiffs chosen among orphans and relatives of victims killed by the regime

Following the discussions held in the focus groups, the IRCT staff, in consultation with the ATPDH, selected survivors to conduct one-on-one interviews, with the objective of delving deeper into personal narratives and gather a more precise understanding of the *individual impacts of the non-implementation of the reparations' decision*. Interviewees were selected according to the narrative provided during the focus groups and the psychological status of the victims.

A total of thirty-two survivors were individually interviewed over three days by the IRCT team. Fifteen of them, examined by a psychologist from the Independent Forensic Expert Group (IFEG), accepted to undergo a screening of their psychological wellbeing in line with the standards set for by §539 of the Istanbul Protocol.

All the victims-plaintiffs were informed that the information collected during the study would be used in a public report and verbal informed consent was collected at the very beginning of each working session.

To minimize the health impacts of the discussions and interviews, the study has been structured following the guidelines provided for by the revised version of the Manual on the Effective Investigation and Documentation of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment<sup>2</sup> (the

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/2022-06-29/Istanbul-Protocol\\_Rev2\\_EN.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/publications/2022-06-29/Istanbul-Protocol_Rev2_EN.pdf)

Istanbul Protocol) and strictly adhering to the IRCT's Global Standards on Rehabilitation of Torture Victims (notably paragraphs 1 and 5)<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> [https://irct.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IRCT\\_Global\\_Standards\\_on\\_Rehabilitation\\_of\\_torture\\_victims\\_2020.pdf](https://irct.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/IRCT_Global_Standards_on_Rehabilitation_of_torture_victims_2020.pdf)

## 5. Research Findings

### a. Violations experienced by the victims-plaintiffs under Habré

#### i. General overview

In general, the era of Hissein Habré's regime from 1982 to 1990 in Chad was marked by a series of grave human rights violations impacting diverse societal groups. The suppression orchestrated chiefly by the DDS, Habré's security force, targeted political dissidents, certain ethnic communities, and perceived threats to the regime.

Some of the groups targeted by the DDS included:

- **Political Opposition:** Individuals affiliated with opposition groups, activists, and perceived regime threats, encountered a spectrum of repressions like arbitrary arrest, detention, torture, and extrajudicial killings.
- **Ethnic Groups:** Specific ethnic communities, notably the Hadjeraï, Zaghawa, and Tama, were subjected to ethnic-based violence and discrimination as control mechanisms. The targeting exacerbated social divisions, embedding fear and mistrust among communities.
- **Children:** Children faced forced recruitment into armed factions, direct violence, or orphanhood due to the persecution of their parents, further amplifying the cycle of hardship and fear.
- **Families:** The loss of breadwinners intensified the economic strain on families already grappling with a socio-political crisis, widening the ripple effects of the regime's brutalities.

#### A wide array of abuses was carried out including:

- **Torture:** Systematic torture encompassed electric shocks, beatings, waterboarding, and burnings within detention hubs like *La Piscine*.
- **Extrajudicial Killings:** Without fair trials, individuals were covertly executed, instilling a climate of terror.

- **Arbitrary Detention:** Prolonged detentions without trials under harsh, inhumane conditions were commonplace.
- **Forced Disappearances:** Families were left in the dark as loved ones were forcibly disappeared with no disclosure on their whereabouts or fate.
- **Sexual Violence:** Utilized as a control mechanism, sexual violence, encompassing rape and sexual assault, left women and girls particularly vulnerable. Men were not exempted from this abuse.<sup>4</sup>

## ii. Observations from individual and group interviews

The thirty-two victims-plaintiffs who were interviewed individually experienced a wide scope of violations, trauma and harm under the Habré regime.

**Targeting of ethnic groups:** Membership in an ethnic group such as the Hadjeraï or the Zaghawa at a time when its leaders were perceived to be a menace to the government and to Hissène Habré's authority often constituted **sufficient grounds for arrest, torture, detention, and execution or enforced disappearance**. In certain instances, a simple insult against the Head of State or public criticism of the government could lead to an arrest. Some political figures, particularly government members or managers of public companies, were also imprisoned.

Habré's victims were frequently arrested and persecuted based on their membership of a particular ethnic group, such as the Arab Chadians, the Hadjeraïs, or the Zaghawas. Responsibility was assigned collectively: if one person took part in the rebellion, the government often took vengeance on the whole family, community, or even the entire ethnic group. Torture and inhumane conditions of detention made up an

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<sup>4</sup> REDRESS, ATPDH, Global Survivors Fund "CHAD STUDY ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR REPARATIONS FOR SURVIVORS OF CONFLICT-RELATED SEXUAL VIOLENCE", [https://redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/GSF\\_Report\\_CHAD\\_EN\\_April2023\\_WEB-1.pdf](https://redress.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/GSF_Report_CHAD_EN_April2023_WEB-1.pdf)

integral part of the government's policy to eliminate the enemy. Arab Chadians were the first ethnic group targeted by the regime. As recalled by one of them:

*"They kept me in detention for almost five years. They used to call me "the Libyan" due to my appearance. They tried to kill me several times, but the death refused to take me. As their attempts were unsuccessful, they transferred me to several detention centers but I survived despite what I have suffered from. I do not know why I am still here."*

**Arbitrary arrests** of known and suspected political opponents were widespread. All the persons who did not openly support the regime were "political" reasons and detained without due process or recourse to a court of law to challenge their arrest and detention. The authorities never produced a warrant at the time of the arrest, for which they rarely provided any reasons. To prevent any opposition from taking shape, the government sometimes resorted to mass arrests. Those suspected of supporting the "Libyan enemy" were often targeted. Any alleged connection with Libya was regarded more seriously than being involved in prohibited political activities.

**Torture:** The most common forms of torture mentioned by the interviewees who were subjected to detention during the regime, and were lately released, included:

- "Arabatchar" binding, involving tying of the arms and ankles together behind the back, causing the chest to expand and arch. The word "arbatachar" derives from the Arabic word for the number "14" (arba'at 'ashar), because the body is extended like a "1" and the body's "4" limbs are tied;
- Forced intake of water;
- The "exhaust pipe," whereby the exhaust pipe of a running vehicle was inserted into the victim's mouth;

- Burning the most sensitive parts of the body with hot objects;
- Torture with sticks, whereby two sticks attached at both ends by cords were placed at the temples and encircled the victim's head to put pressure on the skull;
- Electric shocks, beatings, whippings, and extraction of fingernails; and
- Sexual violence and rape.

Seventeen out of the thirty victims-plaintiffs who took part in Groups 1 and 2 were direct torture survivors and disclosed the techniques used by the Habré officers against them, showing permanent physical sequelae of the events. For example, seven men who participated in Group 1 lost their teeth due to electrocution and are not able to eat properly.

Among the interviewees of Group 1, eight survivors showed scars on their skulls resulting from the severe beating to which they were subjected while in detention. Four male survivors showed also scars resulting from gunfire on their torsos. Two of them reported that they are still living with a bullet in their body, a statement corroborated by the lack of an exit hole for the bullet.

**Sexual violence:** all the female victims-plaintiffs were subjected to sexual abuse and rape and three of them were sent as sexual slaves to the military premises in the Northern Chadian desert.

*"I was raped by Hissein Habré himself. After, they transferred me to a camp in the North together with two other women as sexual slaves. I am the only survivor, the others died shortly after the release, following the physical and psychological suffering endured."*

A man recalled: *"Two security guards rushed into the male section of the prison. They were panicking and saying: "What shall we do now? We did not know she was a mother; it is not our fault!"* According to the testimony provided by the survivor, the security guards subjected the woman to mutilation of her nipples and immediately a mixture of blood and milk started splashing out from the fainted victim.



**Inhumane conditions:** Most victims whom IRCT interviewed said that they still do not understand how they were able to make it out alive. Severe dietary deficiencies, lack of space, overcrowding, deplorable sanitary conditions, lack of medical services, lack of physical activity, heat, and insects all directly contributed to the physical deterioration of the prisoners.

This reality also broke down the prisoners psychologically and was compounded by lack of communication with the outside world, and the atmosphere of constant fear created by enforced disappearances, summary executions, and the daily deaths of detainees due to torture or poor conditions. Corpses were not always cleared out of cells or the prison on the day of death, but instead often left on the cell floor for several days, even during periods of extreme heat.

*“I was obliged to sleep shoulder by shoulder with the corpse of my comrades for several days. During the day, the heat was accelerating the putrefaction process of the corpses and the smell in the cell was unbearable. I still have the images of the dead bodies of my fellow comrades in front of me and cannot sleep at night.”*

Both men and women suffered from food and water deprivation, thus resulting in intestinal disease due to bacterial infections and consequent loss of body fluids, dehydration and severe episodes of incontinence.

*“We were obliged to use our own clothes to clean ourselves or our comrades, no toilets were available in the cells. We were treated worse than stray animals in the street.”*

Women specifically suffered from additional discomfort and discrimination, in addition to the torture to which they were subjected, especially during the menstruation period, due to the complete lack of female sanitary products.

*“I had to tear off scraps of fabric from mine and my dead cellmates’ clothes to preserve a modicum of human dignity and use them as tampons”.*

**Loss of family members:** Although the interviewees of Groups 2 and 3 did not suffer from direct physical pain no imprisonment, they have experienced significant psychological trauma since their beloved ones were apprehended and killed by the forces of the Habré regime, as shared by one victim about the loss of his father. In December 1990, when Habré fell from power, he took to the streets with others to look for their relatives in prison.

*"Despite the risks, I walked for miles around the prisons to look for my father. That lasted one week, and then came the despair."*

The victims were not informed of the fate of their relatives (often the father/husband, breadwinner of the family) and had to live with the absence of the person and the impossibility of retrieving the remains of the body, enduring **strong psychological stress**. Only after some time had passed were a few of the victims informed by neighbors or friends of the fate of their family member, such as for example, that the dead body of their dear one had been found tied to a tree with their throat cut. Others were told that several bodies were seen floating in the river and that their husband or father might have been among them.

*"I could not believe what my neighbor was saying to me regarding the disappearance of my father until I saw with my own eyes bodies of slaughtered persons floating in the waters of the river. Since then, I cannot even think of eating fish or going swimming."*

## **b. Trauma and harm suffered by the victims-plaintiffs**

As a result of the torture and killings of family members which they endured, interviewees suffered from grave **physical and psychological injuries**.

*"They put two sticks around my head and obliged me to keep them for several days. I do not know why they subjected me to this torture, I have completely lost my sight and cannot afford to buy medicines neither to go to visit a doctor as I do not even have money to buy food for my family."*

Three other men lamented having suffered from sexual impotence as a physiological effect of electrocution for several years after their release.

*“My first child was born only four years after my release. I spent all my savings in medical treatment and people were mocking me and my wife, as I was not able to have children.”*

Several of the direct victims are now suffering from ambulation problems due to the severe beatings experienced while in custody and to inhumane detention conditions. These problems have been exacerbated due to the lack of proper medical care: two direct victim-plaintiffs need the physical support of a cane and their youngest child to walk. Most of the direct victims-plaintiffs who were subjected to electrocution were lacking teeth following the shock suffered and cannot properly eat.

The physical and psychological sequelae of torture both on direct and indirect victims have had, and still have, a direct repercussion on their job search: direct victims who suffered from physical torture are unable to perform any kind of work due to disabilities such as ambulation problems, sight and hearing impairment, psychological stress and chronic fatigue.

**Economic distress:** It is experienced by both direct and indirect victims as a **long-term effect** resulting from torture events. All the victims-plaintiffs completely lack the economic resources to address daily issues like housing, food, schooling and health care. Further, all the representatives of Groups 1 and 2 are unemployed, with men (direct victims belonging to Group 1) feeling too sick to even go out or look for a job. All the victims-plaintiffs of the three groups shared a common feeling of perceived discrimination in accessing the job market as, according to their narrative, most employers do not want to hire them for fear of reprisals from the police or because “they denounced the father of the nation in front of the whole world”.

**Women and children left vulnerable:** As reported by representatives of Groups 2 and 3, those who lost their relatives during the dictatorship were left vulnerable and without any form of material support.

Many became victims of torture themselves. As stated by one of the victims, her parents were killed by the regime's henchmen and she was subjected to torture, notably rape, for the sole fact of being the daughter of an alleged opposant to the regime.

*"It was the sunset, they came to our house and apprehended my father. They came back a couple of days later, still at the time of the sunset, dumping my father in front of our door. He was severely injured, but still alive. Two days later, again at sunset, they returned to our home and apprehended both my parents. I could escape because I hid myself in the bushes. After one week, they caught me, brought to the detention center and continuously raped me. I fell unconscious. I was only fourteen years old. Since then, at sunset, I cannot control myself and tears start coming out of my eyes against my will."*

**Outcast and stigmatised:** Direct victims, widows or people whose parents had been killed during the regime were, and are still, considered or perceive themselves as outcast and stigmatised. According to the information provided by the victims-plaintiffs, when the DDS was dismantled, the majority of its officers were reintegrated into its successor, the *Agence Nationale de la Sécurité* (ANS – the National Intelligence Agency), which is accused of continuing the legacy of its predecessor. Four of the victims-plaintiffs said they feel that the DDS (the acronym still used by the interviewees, instead of the new ANS) still watches who talks to them. Those who talk to them are afraid of being arrested. An orphan explained that even nowadays, after the decision, when friends of her father want to visit her and her family, they prefer to meet in the middle of nowhere, avoiding going to her house for fear of reprisals from government officers. This is creating a double-edged form of isolation among direct and indirect victims and the rest of Chadian society, with the latter carefully avoiding being seen in public with the former and the victims keeping a distance from their friends.

**Internal displacement:** Twenty-five out of the thirty interviewees in Groups 2 and 3 relocated following the loss of the breadwinner: most of the killings occurred in the Southern provinces and these victims–

plaintiffs decided to move to N'Djamena for a new beginning. The internal displacement contributed to the precarity of their daily life in several respects:

- Family change: all the interviewees of Group 2 reported that they also had to endure the suffering of their children, who were repeatedly saying *"Had our father been alive, we would not be where we are now. At least, we would have had a home, food, and water"* and *"Why is our luck so bad? How come we do not have a father anymore?"*;
- Lack of support from their community of origin due to the distance;
- Uncertainty regarding housing, including the impossibility of paying rent on a regular basis, resulting in wandering in the outskirts of the city looking for a place in which to sleep with small children;
- Lack of access to schooling for children.

### c. Expectations raised by the 2015 Decision

When the Special Criminal Court of N'Djamena rendered its decision, all the victims welcomed it with joy and hope and the decision was perceived as the final act of recognition of their suffering from the judicial institutions of their own country. A feeling of relief and reconciliation with the past was spreading all over the country. For many of the victims, the decision marked the end of a twenty-five-year long struggle for justice.

All the victims were hoping to have their dignity restored and to the possibility to finally afford *medical care, proper housing and schooling for themselves and their children or grandchildren*.

An orphan recalled the exact feeling at the moment in which the judgment was pronounced. *"It galvanized me, and I thought it would allow us to build a new life. I was happy to be able to pass on the benefits of the compensation to mine and my father's family."*

A widow explained that most of the victims were summoned to the victims' association's headquarters, where a television had been set up to broadcast the verdict. When she heard the verdict, she thought "Glory be to God" and wept.

After their release from the regime's prisons, several victims involved in victims' associations had decided to work together with lawyers and NGOs to bring perpetrators in front of national and international courts and make them accountable for the crimes committed. However, the expectations from the March 2015 judgment were not met despite the binding decision of the Special Criminal Court.

*"When we first learned that Habré's henchmen were sentenced to prison and that the State would have provided compensation to the victims, we were all extremely happy and full of hope, as victims. As victims engaged in the work of the associations, we were more cautious: we tried to calm down our fellows and explain to them that we should rejoice only once we received the compensation. Unfortunately, we were right: eight years have passed and none of us has received a cent from the authorities".*

Despite demonstrations, sit-ins (music, whistles, prayer, sleeping on the spot) the victims are ignored and their demonstrations are often met with police brutality.

*"The President acts as if we weren't people. The President has no good will to help us, he does not want us, even though he helped bring Habré to trial. During the demonstrations, the police used tear gas, injuring people and causing them to fall to the ground."*

The victims-plaintiffs agree that the Chadian government is giving them false hopes. When the victims-plaintiffs had the chance to meet with representatives of the government, every single time they were told to come back the next day because the relevant person could not meet with them.

## 6. The current state of interviewees

Several years have passed since the 2015 judgment. The victims are still suffering from the events which occurred under the Habré regime and also from the non-implementation of reparation measures, in line with the 2015 decision. Direct and indirect victims unanimously agree that they consider themselves as “two-times victims” as they feel that the Habré regime was not only able to deprive them of their fundamental rights during its rule, but its legacy and the non-implementation of the compensation measures are affecting their life tremendously nowadays. All the victims perceive compensation as the second step of their quest for justice and one of the most important, as it will allow them to seek proper medical care, housing and education for their children and grandchildren. They all admit that with the limited, almost inexistent, economic resources they have, they must choose every day which basic needs must be prioritized. Five of the victims-plaintiffs out of the thirty-two individually interviewed stated that they must often be selfish and buy medicines instead of food for the family, due to the unbearable pain.

**Economic struggle:** All of them denounced the lack of economic means to take care of their health problems and their frustration at not having the possibility to offer a better future to their children and grandchildren.

They also mentioned that: ***“Without money, there is no future, no school, no access to health and mental health services, no food, no water, and no health. Without money, there is no tomorrow. Without money, death becomes tangible.”***

Several victims affirm being currently ill, that they are suffering from physical and psychological pain and that they cannot afford medical care. Most of the victims-plaintiffs are unemployed and all of them reported been treated like ***“animals” or “beggars”*** due to their status of victims and their engagement with victims’ associations.

For many, the only means of subsistence is selling goods at the market on an irregular basis, thus meaning not being able to rely on a fixed income nor planning their life. Furthermore, whenever they try to sell their goods, the police forcefully makes them leave by kicking them. All the victims-plaintiffs stressed that,

due to their civic engagement, the police force purportedly target them, and their fellow citizens avoid hiring them for fear of reprisals.

Widows reported depending on their husbands' work as the only breadwinner of their families. After their husbands died, they **no** longer had a **source of income** to rely on. Both they, and their children, felt abandoned with no backbone to support them.

*Despair:* Direct victims and widows reported suffering for approximately 30 years. However, the non-implementation of the 2015 court decision has worsened their feelings: now they consider themselves completely **hopeless, abandoned, isolated, betrayed, and shattered**. It is these combined feelings that brought these victims together to protest against this decision in pursuit of justice.

Both widows and orphaned children are engaging in the struggle for justice, although the victims' children did shift their perspective: it took a generation to understand fully the harm suffered and then become vocal and engage in legal proceedings, not only in memory of their fathers but also for respect of their own children. The victims' children claim that the killing of their father by the regime deprived them of their access to education, mental and physical wellbeing and had an impact even on their own children's access to these basic rights. Their main hope is to allow their children to go to school, and to have a brighter future.

*"I do not want my children to grow up with the image that what occurred to their granddad and what we are suffering from is normal in our country. Further, I do not want to leave the memory of my father covered in dust. The court granted us with compensation, we all deserve to receive that amount and my wish is to use the money to primarily honor my late father and ensure a proper future to my children."*

Victims-plaintiffs also talked about how being **homeless**, with no home to return to, is affecting their reality: going from home to home, scanning each street in order to find a place to stay, represents for



them an additional legacy of the acts committed by the regime. Twenty-eight victims-plaintiffs reported living in tents, which they built themselves and covered with a cloth that they had woven. These tents would flood during heavy storms.

For the totality of the victims-plaintiffs, the major concern is their children's future:

*"What we are suffering from, will continue with our children if the state will not provide us with the compensation granted by the court. The suffering endured by parents continues with our children and we feel hopeless."*

**Health impact of the never-ending struggle:** Since the end of the Habré dictatorship in 1990, the health situation of the survivors drastically deteriorated: many of them died from the sequelae of the torture suffered in the hands of the regime or due to the lack of proper physical and psychological rehabilitation. Other victims have died since the 2015 decision and there is a widespread feeling that the survivors will be all dead by the time compensations is delivered, if ever.

*"I have witnessed the death of my comrades in prison, and I survived. I engaged with the victims' association and I am still seeing my fellow comrades dying every day due to the negligence of the authorities in not granting us what we are supposed to receive, and which will allow us to have access to medical care for all our family members. We will continue to fight for our rights, but we need the state to be pushed to compensate us for our suffering".*

The victims-plaintiffs all reported feeling **physically drained by the never-ending struggle**.

- Several victims-plaintiffs indicated that they now suffer from hypertension, pain all over their bodies, deteriorating vision, work-worn hands, and rheumatism.

- All of them reported not being able to seek medical treatment due to the lack of economic resources.

Additionally, the victims-plaintiffs who attended the study informed us that several of their members passed away due to the lack of economic means for accessing medical services.

### **Physical and psychological trauma:**

In terms of health, all the victims consider themselves to be ill and psychologically suffering. One explains that she suffered a stroke, another has back pain, and another has a cyst requiring surgery. But they cannot afford medical treatment: a hospital consultation is beyond their means (50,000 CFA). Then there is the cost of the hospital stay (250,000 CFA), the drugs and the food needed to recover properly.

*“We cannot afford proper medical care for ourselves or for our children. It is humiliating to know that we are expected to receive compensation and we are still living in extreme poverty. We feel like beggars everyday”.*

Physical symptoms reported by the victims-plaintiffs			
	Direct Victims (Torture survivors)	Indirect Victims (Widows)	Indirect Victims (Orphans)
<u>Hypertension</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Headache</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Diffused pain</u>	<u>X</u>		
<u>Trembling</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Suffocation and chest pain</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Heart palpitation</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Vision problems</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Gastric problems (related to malnutrition and stress)</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>
<u>Nose bleeding as long-term effect of electrocution</u>	<u>X</u>		
<u>Loss of teeth</u>	<u>X</u>		

<u>Ambulation problems</u>	<u>X</u>		
<u>Skin problems</u>	<u>X</u>		
<u>Articulation problems</u>	<u>X</u>		
<u>Getting sick easily</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>	<u>X</u>

In our deeper exploration into the psychological trauma experienced by the interviewees, many reported:

1. **Grief and Sorrow:** Their grief was accompanied by feelings of sadness, anger, guilt and a sense of emptiness and abandonment. These feelings were shared by all the victims-plaintiffs who attended the study. The lack of implementation of the 2015 Decision has deepened this feeling of abandonment.
2. **Social stigma and labeling:** The women not only felt abandoned by their government, but also by their communities (labeled as “beggars”). They felt “broken” and, with their children, “incomplete” as a family, which prevented them from participating in social events.
3. **Trauma and emotional distress:** For the victims-plaintiffs, witnessing their spouse’s imprisonment, or experiencing torture and/or sexual violence themselves, led to the development of PTSD, Anxiety, and Depression among these individuals. Among women who participated in the study, twelve out of eighteen disclosed that they started losing hope after the non-implementation of the decision, and even considering suicide as their only resort to end their suffering. They felt that their reaction was normal considering that they had no money left and no form of support.
4. **Financial Challenges:** For women plaintiffs, losing the “breadwinner” of the family created an economic strain on them and their families, amplifying their emotional distress.
5. **Ambiguous Loss:** Indirect victims such as widows and their children endured the ambiguous circumstances surrounding their husbands’/fathers’ deaths, which rendered their grieving process more complex. Additionally, children’s inability to comprehend why their fathers were killed

exacerbated their feelings of abandonment and frustration of their mothers towards their current situation.

6. Direct and indirect victims are suffering from the loss of the breadwinner: After their husbands died, the women no longer had the financial means to cover their basic needs, including:

- a. **Housing**: Most of the interviewees reported being displaced many times, wandering the streets to see where they can stay.
- b. **Impossibility to support education** for their children.
- c. **Health services**: Some reported that their children died due to their inability to cover their medical expenses.
- d. **Lack of access to mental health services**.
- e. **Lack of food**: Many reported that they would stay for days without food.
- f. **Stigma**: from society (***"Everyone sees us as animals or beggars"***).
- g. **Fear of reprisal against children**: a survivor of sexual abuse affirmed that she is not only desperate regarding her and her children's current situation, but she is also scared by the idea that what she has endured might also be suffered by her daughters:

*"I have two sons and two daughters. Every morning I wake up trying to find a way to protect them from my past and from rape. I know that my sons can protect themselves, but I do have to protect my daughters. This is my only wish. Please, help us all in protecting our kids."*

- h. Victims-plaintiffs often **cannot take part in social events**, such as funerals and weddings. They feel ashamed to go because they are an "incomplete family" (with no husband/father). They also **cannot afford to buy presents**, which makes them feel even more ashamed to take part in these events.

7. Family Changes:

- All of the widowed women reported that their children are also suffering. Their children often tell them: ***“Had our father been alive, we would not be where we are now. At least, we would have had a home, food, and water.”***
- Their children also yearn to go to school; however, school has become an intangible dream to them.
- Their children grieve the loss of their beloved father. They would sometimes mention: ***“Why is our luck so bad? How come we do not have a father anymore?”***
- For all the orphans who participated in the study, receiving the compensation would have a double effect on their life: they would be finally able to honor the memory of their father/parents killed by the regime and offer a proper life to their children. At the same time, they are afraid that they will never receive the amount and will die due to the psychological burden they are enduring since their childhood, leaving their own children alone and thus perpetrating the legacy of the atrocities committed by Habré’s regime.

From a formal perspective, almost all interviewees showed symptoms of PTSD and satisfied the diagnostic criteria for it. Their suffering has been exacerbated by the lack of justice prior to the 2015 Decision and it is now worsened by the failure to implement the reparation measures ruled by the court in 2015.

Victims-plaintiffs experience suicidal thoughts, sleeplessness from physical pain or fear of nightmares. Women, both as direct and indirect victims, are suffering from anger outbursts and crying spells. They are also bearing the burden of their children’s misery and malaise, thus creating a deep sense of guilt. All of them reported having been confronted with words such as ***“If our father were still alive, we would not be where we are now. At least, we would not be hungry.”***, multiple times since the loss of their husband.

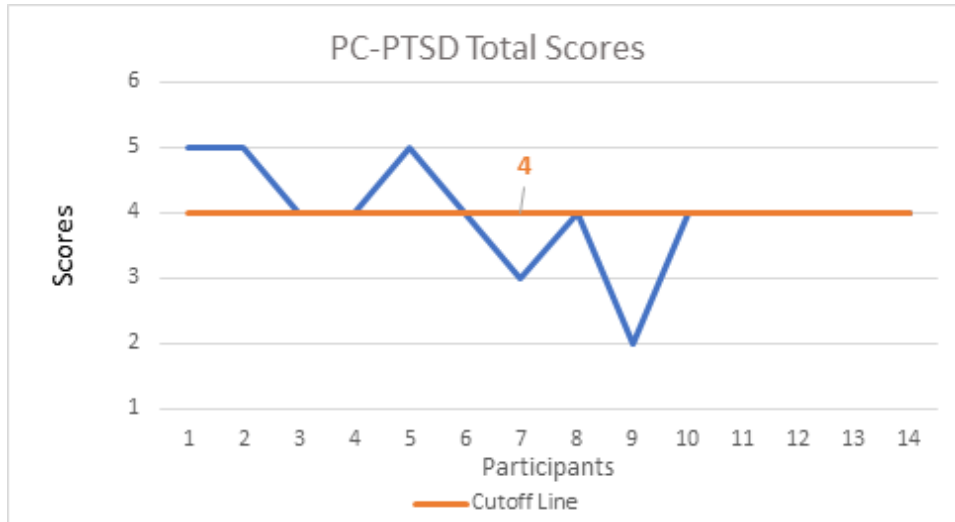
The totality of the victims-plaintiffs belonging to Groups 1 and 2 consider that they will die before receiving any money, leaving their children in economic distress. All the plaintiffs stressed the fact that

the money granted through the compensation measure will be crucial in ensuring schooling or support for economic initiatives for their children, such as opening shops or getting a taxi driver license.

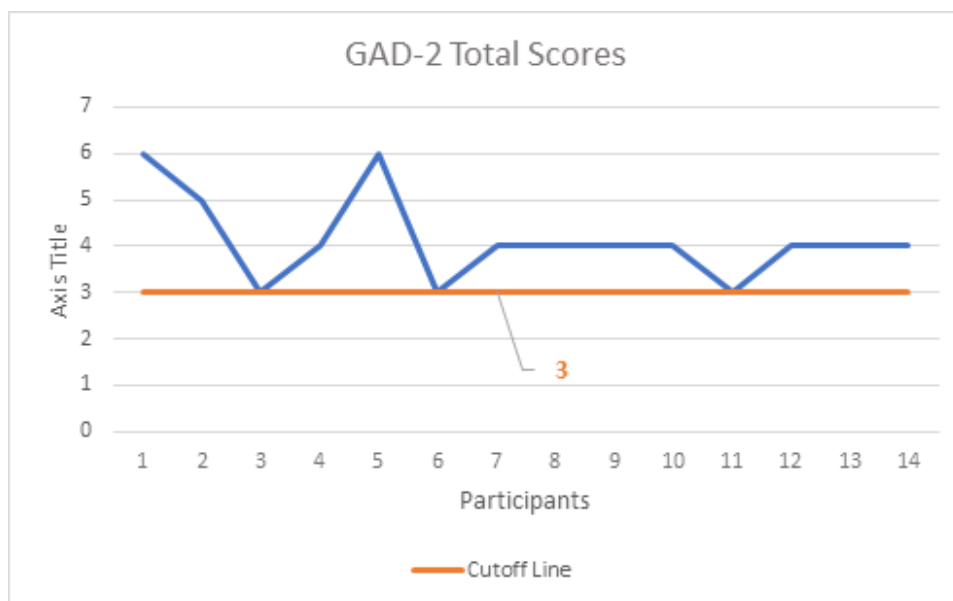
**Fifteen victims-plaintiffs, identified among the participants of Group 1 and 2, were selected for face-to-face interviews with a psychologist of the Independent Forensic Expert Group. The selected interviewees included six direct victims (four men and two women) and nine indirect victims –widows)**

All of them agreed to undergo the specific Primary Care PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) Screen for DSM-5 (PC-PTSD-5), the Generalized Anxiety Disorder 2-item (GAD-2), and the Patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ-9). These tools were used to screen for PTSD, Anxiety and Depression, respectively. One interviewee was unable to answer these questions due to difficulties with comprehending information as a result of the torture he endured.

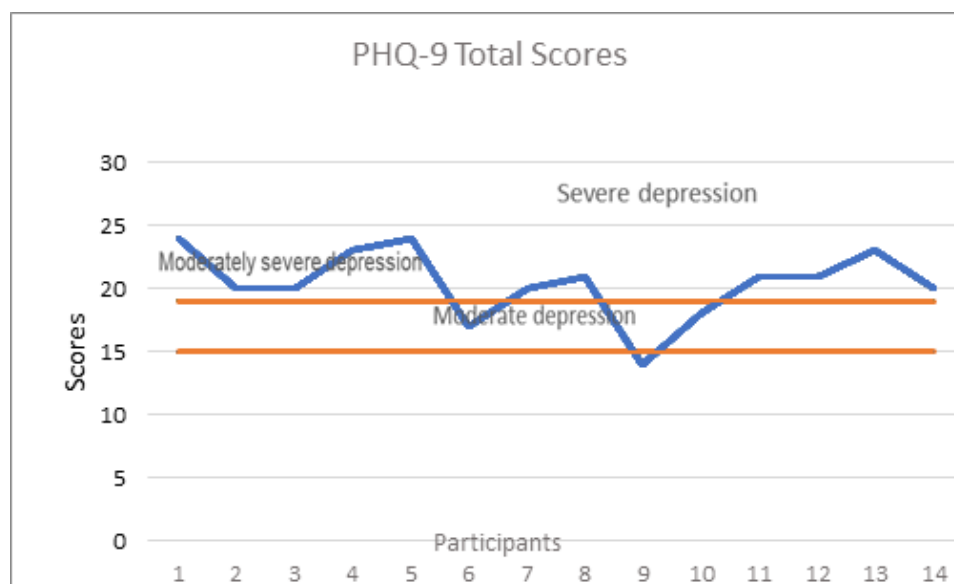
According to the **PC-PTSD-5**, participants scored an average of **4**, which is within the cut-off score of 4 for PTSD (See Figure 1). This entails that these individuals are still struggling with PTSD symptoms due to internal wounds that have not been treated for almost 30 years. Compensation cannot remove these wounds, but may potentially act as a key step towards supporting them on their journey to recovery.



Similarly for the **GAD-2** measure, for which the average score was **4.14**, which is above the cut-off score of 3 for Anxiety (See Figure 2). Similarly, this represents the ongoing struggles that these survivors are facing. Their worries about their future and their children's future are exacerbated by their lack of compensation.



Lastly, participants' average score on the **PHQ-9** measure was **20.4**, which falls within the "Severe Depression" range (See Figure 3). These results outline the gravity of this situation, and the need to take immediate action to help alleviate these symptoms. Compensation is key to ending their suffering.





**Continuing stigma:** Victims are mocked by family, colleagues, police officers and people in the street. These people have no confidence that compensation will be paid. They are astonished that the case remains pending. They feel abandoned.

*“People are mocking us and our struggle. They are even mocking our deceased who were killed by the regime. They say that we will never see the money we are entitled to and that our struggle will lead us to the grave, leaving our children alone in the streets, without the support of an adult.”*

A number of victims are experiencing fear of reprisals against their own children. A woman, victim of sexual violence during the dictatorship, affirmed that she is scared that a similar crime might be committed on her daughters:

*“They know who we are, they see us in the streets during the demonstrations and they know where we live. I am scared for my daughters, but I do not want to give this struggle which is consuming my life and leading me to the grave. I do prefer to die instead of giving up.”*

**Fatigue and mistrust:**

After an initial moment of relief following the 2015 decision, all the interviewees stated that nowadays they feel that their situation has worsened when compared to the one prior to the judgment. A sense of physical and psychological fatigue is affecting their life and they are lacking the will and strength to endure the never-ending battle against the legacy of the Habré regime.

All the interviewees disclosed a profound mistrust towards the government and their promise of compensation: *“Years are passing by and politicians are using us as bargaining chips to win electoral consensus and convince the public and international institutions that the authorities are now on the right*

*path to conciliate the memory of the country. That's not the truth: we, as the last dictatorship survivors, are discriminated against daily. The authorities are only trying to gain time to see death coming after us. We are willing to continue our struggle, but we need medical care also to support the future of our children."*

Further, as mentioned above, it has been affirmed that instead of punishing the perpetrators as stated in the 2015 Decision, the government reintegrated former agents of the DDS within newly constituted units in charge of national security, the ANS.

## **7. Conclusions**

Based on the interviews conducted, the IRCT found compelling evidence of how the non-implementation of the 2015 Decision is affecting the plaintiffs-victims' daily life and hampering their path towards their full rehabilitation.

As this report has shown, a wide portion of Chadian society was victim of the brutality of Hissein Habré's regime during its reign of terror. Further, the suffering of the victims did not end with the deposition of the dictator nor with his death in 2021. As highlighted in this research, the consequences of the protracted abuses put in place by the Habré regime span over four decades and affect multiple generations. Direct and indirect victims who actively took part in this report represent only a small portion of the thousands of victims who are suffering and enduring a life of hardship.

This report highlights how the delay in the implementation of the reparation measures ordered by the Special Criminal Court in 2015 is affecting every aspect of the plaintiffs' life, physically, psychologically, and socio-economically. All the plaintiffs are primary victims of the massive trauma experienced due to the cruelty of the regime. The delay in the implementation of the ruling exposes the failure to meet State's commitments and obligations in terms of reparation and affects not only the victims, but also has

repercussions for future generations and society. Reparation measures provide victims with recognition of their status as well as the recognition of their rights. All the plaintiffs have been recognised as victims by the 2015 decision, but their rehabilitation process is far from being achieved as the authorities are turning a blind eye to their duties.

All the victims-plaintiffs are in dire need of medical care, including psychological support, which they cannot afford due to the cost of the service. They all share their desire to own a property where they can rebuild their life and where their children can grow. Schooling is another basic need highlighted by the interviewees.

Compensation cannot remove the wounds but may act as a key step towards the rehabilitation process of the victims-plaintiffs, their families and also influence the whole society, healing massive and historical trauma and paving the path for broader reparations. In addition to the compensation measure, perceived by the totality of the interviewees as the primary act to be implemented by the authorities, the victims-plaintiffs also stressed the need to implement the erection of the commemorative monument for all the victims of the Habré's regime, as well as the transformation of the former DDS headquarters into a museum, which were both also ordered by the court in 2015.

*NB: All of the interviewed survivors reported feeling very grateful for the team's efforts to document their cases in order to help them achieve compensation. They reported the following: "We, as victims, have been waiting a very long time for someone to help us. We are very happy that you came because our government did nothing to support us. It is our right to be compensated. We have suffered a lot."*

On behalf of the International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims (IRCT),

  
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