

New York, March 27, 2018

Re: Nomination of Jacqueline Moudeïna for the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award

Dear Madam, Dear Sir,

It is my pleasure to support the nomination of Ms. Jacqueline Moudeïna, president of the Chadian Association for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights (ATPDH), for the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights Award.

Jacqueline is one of the leading activists in Chad. She has risked everything—and was severely injured in an assassination attempt—to bring to justice Chad’s former dictator, Hissène Habré, and his accomplices.

In May 2016, Habré was convicted of crimes against humanity, war crimes, and torture, including sexual violence and rape, by the Extraordinary African Chambers in the Senegalese court system and sentenced to life in prison. In April, an appeals court confirmed the verdict and ordered Habré to pay approximately 123 million euros in victim compensation. The advent of the trial, 25 years after Habré was overthrown and fled to Senegal, was entirely due to the perseverance and tenacity of Habré’s victims and their allies, and to Jacqueline in particular. The New York Times has called the case “a Milestone for Justice in Africa.”

Jacqueline has been leading Habré’s victims in battle for the last 16 years. She lives with the victims, she shares their suffering, she helps with their personal problems, she knows each of their stories. And of course she was their lead lawyer at the trial. Without her, the victims wouldn’t have had the same connection to the trial. It was also thanks to her that Habré was convicted for sexual violence, which was not included in the charge sheet. It was only as the campaign picked up steam and Habré’s trial appeared likely, that the survivors began, hesitantly, to give their full stories to Jacqueline, their lawyer and trusted

advisor, who coaxed them through their concern about coming forward. Jacqueline even returned to Chad during the trial to persuade some of the reluctant survivors to come testify, and she was there in the court, putting them at ease and giving them the courage and the confidence to testify.

After completing her university studies in Law in the Republic of Congo, Jacqueline began to work for the ATPDH branch in Brazzaville. She then returned to Chad, passed the bar in N'Djamena, and became the second only woman lawyer in Chad; she also started to work for the ATPDH in N'Djamena.

When Habré was indicted in Dakar in January 2000 for the atrocities committed under his dictatorship from 1982 to 1990, our Chadian partners were unanimous that Jacqueline be asked to represent Habré's victims. In addition, she took the even bolder step of filing victims' complaints against Habré's henchmen—many of whom continued to wield power within Chad's security apparatus. Jacqueline quickly became the object of numerous threats to her life.

Jacqueline did not give up, however, and obtained a landmark ruling from Chad's Constitutional Court that the cases against Habré's accomplices could go forward. As a result, top officials were faced with criminal charges and were called in by a new investigating magistrate. One of those against whom Jacky brought charges of torture was Mahamat Wakaye, who had been the Deputy Director of National Security under Habré's regime and who was now Police Commissioner for N'Djaména. And in June 2001, when Jacqueline was participating in a peaceful women's demonstration, a squad of police agents, commanded by Wakaye, threw a grenade at her, spraying shrapnel into her leg. As Jacky was rushed to hospital, shots apparently were fired at her car. With the help of Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and the FIDH, she was then evacuated to France, where she underwent a series of operations. She still walks with a limp today, and often experiences pain in her leg due to the shrapnel still embedded in it.

When Jacky returned from France, she did not hesitate to file a complaint herself against Mahamat Wakaye. When Wakaye was called in by the investigating magistrate, he reportedly tore the convocation up and threw it in the judge's face. Only pressure from Chadian and international rights groups forced the case to trial. I attended parts of the trial, in a N'Djaména courthouse overflowing with Habré's victims, Chadian NGOs, and ordinary people come to watch brave Jacky's challenge to the all-powerful Wakaye. A model of dignity as always, Jacky stood on her feet for hours on end despite the unbearable pain in her leg. Despite the evidence presented, Wakaye was acquitted.

This did not dampen Jacqueline's determination to see the victims of Habré's regime obtain justice, however. For the past 18 years, I have worked very closely with Jacqueline on the legal cases against Habré. She has been much more than the victims' lawyer—she has been the glue which holds all the Chadian groups together behind the case.

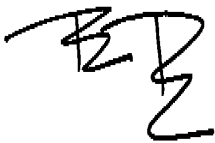
In January 2004, she was elected President of the ATPDH. In this capacity, she has had to take a more prominent role in the key issues facing Chad today such as the management of oil pipeline revenues, the spillover from the conflict in the Darfur, and the perennial issues of corruption and impunity, as well as continuing her work as legal counsel for the victims of the Habré regime.

In February 2008, after Sudanese-backed rebels were defeated in the capital, the government cracked down on civil society. Jacqueline narrowly escaped arrest and was forced into hiding and then exile, although she returned to Chad a few months later after spending two months traveling around Europe speaking about the situation in Chad.

People look to Jacqueline for her strength and her dignity. She is intelligent, articulate, committed and, obviously, brave.

I would of course be happy to discuss Jacqueline and her work in greater depth.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'RB' followed by a stylized flourish.

Reed Brody
Counsel
Human Rights Watch