



Global Nonviolent Action Database

Published on *Global Nonviolent Action Database* (<https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>)

Political prisoners in Djibouti fast for rights, 1998

March

1998

to: May

1998

Country: Djibouti

Location Description: *Gabode Prison*

Goals:

For the Djiboutian authorities to improve food and medical resources at the Gabode prison

Methods

Methods in 1st segment:

- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 2nd segment:

- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 3rd segment:

- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 4th segment:

- 011. Records, radio, and television
- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 5th segment:

- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Methods in 6th segment:

- 159. The fast (fast of moral pressure, hunger strike, satyagrahic fast)

Classifications

Classification:

Change

Cluster:

Human Rights

Group characterization:

- Political prisoners

Leaders, partners, allies, elites

Leaders:

Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD)

Partners:

Not known

External allies:

Amnesty International, The United Nations, Radio France International, Hunger Strikers in France

Involvement of social elites:

Not known

Joining/exiting order of social groups

Groups in 1st Segment:**Groups in 2nd Segment:****Groups in 3rd Segment:****Groups in 4th Segment:****Groups in 5th Segment:**

- Radio France International

Groups in 6th Segment:

- Amnesty International
- The United Nations

Segment Length: 2 weeks

Opponent, Opponent Responses, and Violence

Opponents:

President Hassan Gouled Aptidonto, Djibouti government

Nonviolent responses of opponent:

Not known

Campaigner violence:

Not known

Repressive Violence:

Torture of prisoners, inhumane living conditions, inadequate food and medical treatment

Success Outcome

Success in achieving specific demands/goals:

0 points out of 6 points

Survival:

0.5 points out of 1 point

Growth:

3 points out of 3 points

Notes on outcomes:

The hunger strike did not lead to improvements in the conditions at Gabode prison. Their strike, however, alerted other groups about the inhumane conditions of the prison, and led to the inquiry of the treatment of prisoners at Gabode by Amnesty International and The United Nations.

The Republic of Djibouti is in the Horn of Africa, between Ethiopia, Somalia, and the Red Sea. It is one of the least populous countries of Africa.

In February 1998, the Djiboutian government arrested some members of Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) for criticizing their government. The government sent the detainees to Gabode Prison where guards imprisoned and tortured them.

In March forty imprisoned FRUD members engaged in a hunger strike to protest prison conditions. They asserted that the prison lacked in food supply, clean water, and electricity. Although the prison permitted inmates with serious medical conditions two visits per month by a doctor, those with serious medical issues were denied transfer to a hospital. In addition, the prison lacked proper living conditions and at times squeezed up to ten individuals into an area of three-square meters in oppressive heat. The Ministry of Justice officials claimed that the lack of funding hindered their ability to provide even minimal services to inmates.

Shortly after, about two hundred more prisoners joined the hunger strike in protest of the inhumane conditions, and the strike lasted for several days. In April, the Djibouti government banned several local FM stations because they broadcasted a report from Radio France International (RFI) about a group of hunger strikers in Paris protesting Djibouti prison conditions.

Mohamed Adan Ibrahim, a prisoner at Gabode prison, died from a heart attack on May 31. The prisoners abandoned the hunger strike because several sick and injured detainees were hospitalized. The government later allowed the prisoners access to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and to an international medical team. Amnesty International requested President Hassan Gouled Aptidonto's government to hold fair trials for political detainees and release those found innocent, as well as provide humane treatment for all detainees.

Overall, conditions in Gabode Prison failed to improve. The food remained scarce and authorities continued to deny prisoners access to proper medical care. The hunger strike, however, prompted human rights organizations to publicize the inhumane conditions of the prison, and asked the public to write letters to the Djiboutian government. The organizations requested that the letters demand that the government: (1) guarantee the physical and psychological health of all detainees, to take immediate measures to improve the conditions of the prison, to provide adequate food, water, and medical care, (2) release detainees with no charges, and provide fair trials for all charged detainees, (3) ensure the respect for human rights and fundamental liberties at all times. Since then, Amnesty International, The United Nations, and other organizations have tried to ensure humane treatment of all prisoners at Gabode prison.

Research Notes

Sources:

- 1999 Annual Report for Djibouti. Rep. Amnesty International, 1999. Web. 7 Mar. 2011.
<<http://www.amnestyusa.org/annualreport.php?id=C19D7841A1345E6280256A0F005C1B54&c=DJI>>.
- Djibouti: Country Reports on Human Rights Practices. Rep. US Department of State, 23 Feb. 2000. Web. 7 Mar. 2011.
<<http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/1999/243.htm>>.
- "Djibouti Hunger Strike Dies." Arabic News [Djibouti] 21 June 1998
- Horn of Africa: The Monthly Review. Rep. United Nations, 17 June 1998. Web. 7 Mar. 2011.
<http://www.africa.upenn.edu/eue_web/hoa0598.htm>.
- Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, Djibouti: Treatment of members of the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (FRUD) by the current government, 1 November 1998, DJI30299.E,
<http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/3ae6acef30.html> [accessed 7 March 2011]
- The World Organisation Against Torture. "Djibouti; Case DJI 290499.1 FOLLOW-UP Case DJI 290499." Africa News 21 May 1999.

Name of researcher, and date dd/mm/yyyy:

Nicole Vanchieri, 09/03/2011

A project of Swarthmore College, including Peace and Conflict Studies, the Peace Collection, and the Lang Center for Civic and Social Responsibility.

Copyright Swarthmore College.



Global Nonviolent Action Database is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Original website design and artwork created by [Daniel Hunter](#).

Permissions beyond the scope of this license may be available at <http://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu>.

Registered users can [login](#) to the website.

Source URL (retrieved on 02/25/2020 - 13:04): <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/content/political-prisoners-djibouti-fast-rights-1998>

Links:

[1] <https://nvdatabase.swarthmore.edu/category/pcs-tags/mainly-or-initiated-people-color>