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Chad

# Mahamat Idriss Déby consolidates his power in Chad

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**In Chad, the "National Sovereign and Inclusive Dialogue" (DNIS) convened by Mahamat Idriss Déby has just finished its work. It recommends extending the transition period by two years and allowing Déby to stand for presidential elections. The way is clear to perpetuate the dictatorship of the Déby clan with the blessing of France.**

When Idriss Déby was killed on the frontline by rebels in April 2021, his son Mahamat took power in a Transitional Military Council composed of fifteen generals. This was an unconstitutional manoeuvre, since it was the President of the National Assembly who was to ensure this transition. By convening an 'inclusive and sovereign national dialogue', Mahamat Déby seemed to be responding to an old demand of the opposition, that of ensuring a broad debate to re-found the Chadian state on a unitary and democratic basis.

## Simulacrum of a dialogue

Prior to the DNIS, a pre-dialogue was held with the politico-military groups in Doha, Qatar. The disappointing results gave an insight into the motives of the ruling junta.

For example, the issue of the army was hardly discussed. Yet it plays a decisive role in the country's politics. Déby senior had ensured himself an exceptional longevity in power thanks to its control. He transformed it into a praetorian guard with a staff and elite regiments composed on ethnic grounds. Déby has made Chadian soldiers the auxiliaries of France's armed forces during its interventions in the Sahel, thus making himself indispensable.

In fact, the DNIS had only one function: to endorse the power of Déby's son. From now on, Déby will be able to run in future presidential elections, in contradiction with the recommendations of the African Union; the transitional period is extended by 24 months; the Military Transitional Committee is dissolved, giving Mahamat Déby carte blanche to run the country.

## Opponents to Déby's rescue

The DNIS profoundly restructured Chad's political space. Thus, some opponents joined the Déby camp. Among them, Gali Gatta Ngothé, an opposition deputy who chaired the DNIS, and Saleh Kebzabo, a historical opponent, who has just accepted the post of Prime Minister of a new government that wants to be of national unity. This will not be the first time that opponents join the Déby clan only to leave a few years, sometimes a few months, later, once their role as stooge has become useless. Kebzabo, in this respect, is a key player. With his notoriety and his extensive address book, he will allow Mahamat Déby to obtain the good graces of the African Union and more broadly of the Western camp - despite his denials when he came to power.

The remaining opponents, the politico-militaries of FACT (Front pour l'alternance et la concorde au Tchad) and the CNCR (Coordination nationale pour le changement et la réforme), thus find justification for boycotting the DNIS and continuing the armed struggle. Dozens of civil society and political organisations such as the Wakit Tamma coalition (which could be translated as 'the hour has come') and the Transformers party are calling for a mobilisation for a Chad that is truly a state governed by the rule of law. [\[1\]](#)

## A complicit silence

France refused to condemn Mahamat Déby's putsch, unlike Mali, Burkina Faso and Guinea, which experienced similar situations, on the grounds that Chad was a special case. The particularity conferred on Chad is explained by its role in the fight against jihadists. This oil state spends 30-40% of its resources on an army of nearly 50,000 for a population of 16 million. This plethoric army has a double function: to protect the regime in place against armed rebellions inside Chad, and to participate in the fight against terrorism in the region. Chadian troops were in Mali with the French as part of Operation Serval, in Cameroon and Nigeria against Boko Haram and are participating in the G5 in the Sahel.

The availability of seasoned soldiers, especially in Sahelian combat, is a valuable asset for France. All the more so as they are always on the front line, recording many losses in their ranks. We can thus understand France's great leniency towards the new Chadian government, which is considered essential for the country's stability, and so much the worse if it is done at the expense of the most basic needs of the population.

18 October 2022

Translated by **International Viewpoint** from [l'Anticapitaliste](#).

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