

Preliminary Statistical Analysis of AVCRP & DDS Documents

A report to Human Rights Watch
about Chad under the government
of Hissène Habré

November 4, 2003



This report was written by Miguel Cruz, Kristen Cibelli and Jana Dudukovic of the the Human Rights Data Analysis Group (HRDAG) of the Benetech Initiative. The authors wish to thank Patrick Ball, Director of Human Rights Programs at Benetech, for his suggestions, and Reed Brody, Advocacy Director at Human Rights Watch, for his dedication and support of this work. They also acknowledge HRDAG team members Jana Asher for guidance on the statistical analysis, and Rafe Kaplan for his technical assistance. We are grateful to Olivier Bercault, Camille Bonnant, Maria Koulouris, Carrie Allen, Mary Kinney, Tara Plochocki, Iram Chaudhary, Joel Dossa, Tamita

Ngarbaroum, Camille Park, Elizabeth Roesch, and Vivianna Beltrametti Walker of Human Rights Watch for collecting and coding the original documents. Herb Spierer, Fritz Scheuren, and Jim Fruchterman provided helpful comments on earlier drafts of the report. Finally, we wish to express our admiration and thanks to Souleyman Guengueng for his courage standing up for victims in Chad. The original work for this study was undertaken under the auspices of the Science and Human Rights Program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Funding was provided to HRDAG by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

The materials contained herein represent the opinions of the authors and editors and should not be construed to be the view of the Benetech Initiative, any of Benetech's constituent projects, the Benetech Board of Directors or the donors to Benetech.

Copyright © 2003 by
The Benetech Initiative
480 S. California Ave., Suite 201
Palo Alto, CA 94306-1609

Certain rights are granted under the Creative Commons "Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike" license, available on the web at:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/1.0/legalcode>

The license terms are summarized here:

Attribution: The licensor permits others to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work. In return, licensees must give the original author credit.

Noncommercial: The licensor permits others to copy, distribute, display, and perform the work. In return, licensees may not use the work for commercial purposes — unless they get the licensor's permission.

Share Alike: The licensor permits others to distribute derivative works only under a license identical to the one that governs the licensor's work.

Contact Information

The Benetech Initiative
tel: +1 650-475-5440
fax: +1 650-475-1066
Email: info@benetech.org
Web: <http://www.benetech.org>

Introduction

Hissène Habré's rule over the former French colony of Chad from 1982 to 1990 was marked by numerous and credible allegations of systematic torture and crimes against humanity. This report is a preliminary analysis of a repository of documents uncovered by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in July 2002. The documents are official documents of Habré's secret police, La Direction de la Documentation et de la Securite (DDS) recovered from a former prison run by the DDS. The examination of these documents is divided in two parts.

Part one considers two types of documents within the entire collection for a three year period; daily prison logs and death certificates. Analysis of these documents over time reveals a rate of mortality many times greater than the crude mortality rate in Chad, evidence of the deplorable conditions in the prisons.

The second part of the analysis of the DDS documents looks at those documents *specifically* sent or received by Hissène Habré. These documents show that Habré had direct communication with, and command responsibility over, the DDS.

DDS Documents

A room full of DDS documents was discovered by HRW at the site of a former DDS prison in N'Djamena. A database designed by HRDAG was used to cross-reference individuals and institutions cited in the documents. These documents were catalogued and entered into the database by an HRW team.¹

It is unclear to what degree the discovered documents are representative of all the DDS documents that may have existed. The majority

of the 2,745 DDS documents in the HRW database date from 1986, but this does not necessarily mean that the majority of DDS activity occurred during this time.

In fact, an alternative source of data for the same period shows a different pattern. A human rights group founded by former prisoners, the Chadian Association of Victims of Political Repression and Crime (AVCRP), gathered testimony from hundreds of former prisoners of the DDS, widows, and orphans. According to the AVCRP data, 1987 and 1989 were the most intense years.

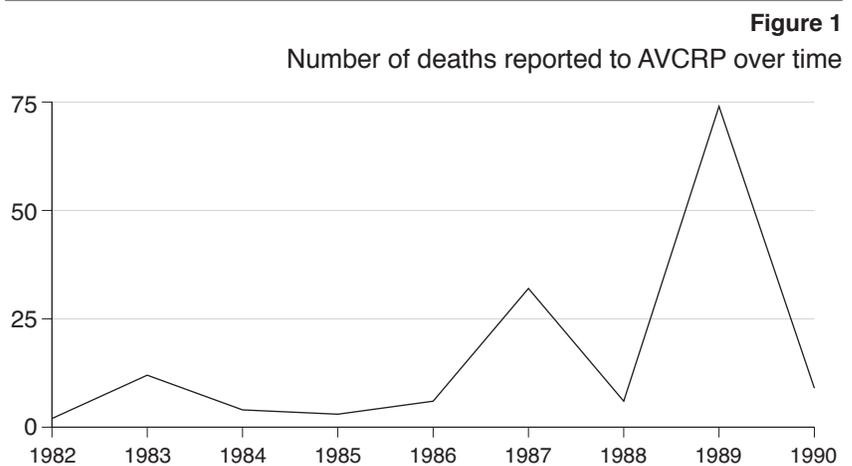


Figure 1 shows a breakdown of deaths reported to the AVCRP over time.

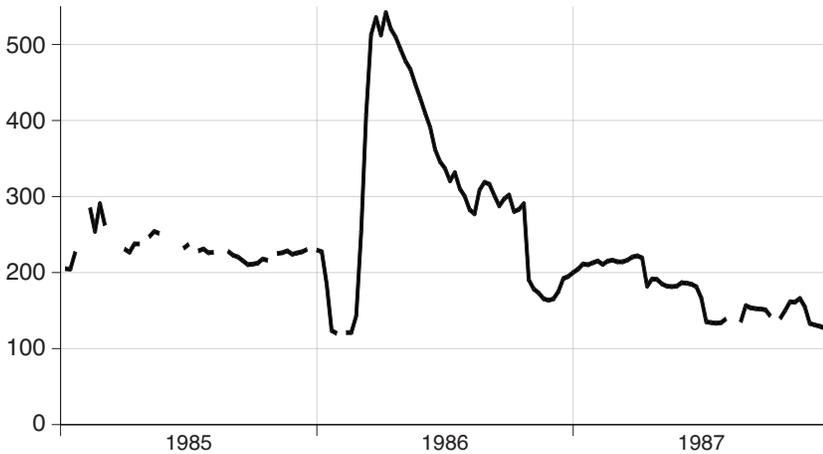
It is likely that AVCRP data is representative of the pattern of deaths over time because those who gave testimony were arbitrarily selected and could have covered any part of the period. The DDS documents, on the other hand, only give a reliable representation of the time period that they cover.

The pattern seen in Figure 1 above is consistent with non-quantitative observations. For example, the peaks in the number of deaths coincide with Habré's alleged crackdowns on various ethnic groups that he perceived as a threat to his regime. The Hadjerai were reportedly arrested and killed in large numbers in 1987 and the Zaghawa in 1989.²

¹Members of the HRDAG team have begun matching the records within the database to link records of the same individual or institution mentioned in the documents. See Future Analysis section for more details.

²Please see <http://web.amnesty.org/library/index/engAFR200042001!Open>, page 4, and <http://www.nesl.edu/lawrev/vol35/2/brody.pdf>, page 322.

Figure 2
Average number of victims in detention, by week, 1985–1987



The DDS documents are not representative over time. However, the available data suggest a picture of conditions in the prisons under Habré during a select period.

Mortality survey in the N'Djamena prison

This portion of the report uses DDS daily Situation Journals and Certificates of Death³ in order to calculate the rate of mortality in the prisons. The period January 1, 1985 to December 31, 1987 was selected for this analysis because 1986 had the most document coverage in the database. To contextualize the analysis, the preceding and following year were also included (See Figure 1 in Appendix 2).

The Situation Journals logged AM and PM figures for the number of detainees in the prison population that day. The AM figures were select-

³Some prisoners were reported dead in multiple types of documents, so to avoid overestimating the number of dead, we decided to use only Death Certificates for the current analysis. Once the entire database has been matched across all individual records, calculations will be rerun, including all document types. Using more documents will find more deaths, thereby increasing the mortality rates presented here.

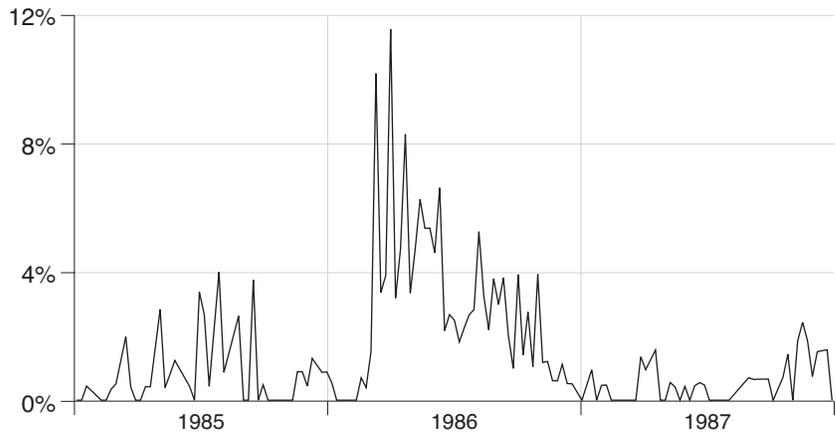
ed as the base against which other events occurring that day would be compared. Figure 2 shows the daily average number of detainees, by week, based on information from the DDS Situation Journals for the period January 1, 1985 to December 31, 1987. The weekly average was calculated by grouping the daily reports into seven day periods beginning on January 1, 1985.⁴

The number of prisoners detained for most weeks from January 1985 to January 1986 is relatively stable, between 200 and 250 persons. Then on January 17, 1986, the average number of prisoners drops to 124.⁵ The daily average number of detained persons remains around 120 until three weeks later, on

March 1, when the situation changes dramatically and the prison population increases to 571. The number of prisoners is still high but begins

Figure 3

N'Djamena prison weekly mortality rate, 1985–1987



March 1, when the situation changes dramatically and the prison population increases to 571. The number of prisoners is still high but begins

⁴The sum of detainees for the week was divided by the *actual* number of days for which there were reports available. Investigating the distribution of daily reporting, it was observed that reporting was not done on Sundays. See Appendix 1, Figure 2 for more information.

⁵Documents for this period shows that there was a mass release of detainees over a two day period. Between January 16 and 17, 1986 there were 159 prisoners documented as released. Another mass release occurred between October 24 and 25 when 82 prisoners were recorded as released.

to decline after March 1986 and falls back to the 1985 average level by late 1986.

Figure 3 shows the mortality rate for the same three year period of 1985–1987, based on the DDS-issued death certificates. The rate of mortality was calculated based on the same weekly groupings used for detainees from the Situation Journals. The total number of prisoners dead in detention for each week was summed and the total was divided by the average number of detainees to calculate the mortality rate. Note that for March 1986, the mortality rate peaks at nearly 12% per week.

Figure 4
Mortality Comparison 1985-1987

Year	Crude mortality per 1000 ⁶	Prison mortality per 1000
1985	2.31	7.81
1986	2.29	36.91
1987	2.26	5.32

Figure 4 is a comparison between the annual mortality rates for the general population in Chad and the annual mortality rates for the prison population for the years 1985 to 1987. Especially notable is the difference between the mortality rates in 1986; detainees were *16 times* more likely to die than members of the general population.

Also note that the crude mortality rate in the comparison includes infant and child mortality figures which were catastrophically high for Chad during this period. Annual mortality rates for Chad in this period were 144 infant deaths per 1000 births; the mortality rate for for children 0-5 years was 248 deaths per 1000 births.⁷

The prison mortality rates presented here are *minimum* figures. Additional research into the data are being done which will most likely increase the actual prison mortality rates. Additional DDS document types that reported death

⁶Chadian census figures were obtained from the U.S. Census Bureau International Program (see <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipd/idbsprd>).

⁷This data comes from the United Nations: National Population Policies, 2001.

will be reviewed, as well as records from other human rights projects that documented deaths. Further exploration of available census data will also be undertaken. We expect that the calculated prison mortality rates will be significantly higher than the general adult male population when the final report is issued.

It is extraordinary to note that even as the number of prisoners *increased* five-fold, the prison population suffered a near 12% mortality rate. It is likely that prison over-crowding, combined with a lack of food, water and medical treatment led to this high rate of mortality.

Hissène Habré in the DDS Documents

The DDS documents were classified and coded by HRW before they were entered into the database. The documents were broken down into three major categories — General, Specific, and Other Sources — and then sub-divided further within these categories. Appendix 2 describes the document classification and the number of documents in the database under each type.

The table in Appendix 2 shows that the DDS documents discovered by HRW were predominantly internal documents originating from within the DDS. Over 378 (15%) of these 2,488 documents were specifically addressed to Habré from the DDS. 257 (9%) of the discovered DDS

Figure 5
DDS documents addressed specifically to Habré
1982–1990

Year	Number of DDS documents	Percent of annual total
1982	0	0.00
1983	6	3.00
1984	4	2.22
1985	19	7.09
1986	4	0.69
1987	8	1.75
1988	83	29.12
1989	171	60.00
1990	83	60.58

documents originated from external sources such as the Ministry of the Interior, the army, other government agencies, and international organizations. Habré was the primary recipient on 211 (82%) of these documents.

Figure 5 is a breakdown of the documents from the DDS to Habré by year, which shows a sharp rise in communication between the DDS and Habré in 1988 and 1989. The number of documents addressed to Habré rise dramatically in proportion to the total number of documents in the database.

The documents from the DDS addressed *specifically* to Habré in the database included intelligence reports and summaries of the current situation in particular regions. They also covered the activities of particular groups or individuals. The majority (70%) of documents in the database from the DDS to Habré in 1985 are general information and intelligence reports, entitled Fiches d'Informations.

The titles of the documents from 1988 to 1990 are more varied and focus on specific intelligence and security issues. Between 1988 and 1990, for example, 43 documents report on the activities and behavior of specific opposition groups and individuals, and 11 detail the arrest of specific individuals and enemy agents.

Future Analysis

There are 2,745 documents in the DDS database, including more than over 49,000 records of named persons, but many people are reported multiple times. A process is currently underway to identify and match individuals who appear in multiple documents. Each of these persons can be a victim, agent, author of the document, recipient, or simply mentioned in the document.

Initial analysis indicates that matching multiple mentions of the same person will reduce the total number of *unique* individuals to between 10,000 and 12,000. Several avenues of study based on the DDS documents are planned once matching is complete:

- The movement and fate of individual prisoners
- Chain-of-command and reporting structures within the DDS
- Ethnic breakdowns of both prisoners and agents of the DDS

Census data reported by the United Nations, the World Health Organization, and from the République du Tchad, Ministère Délégué à la Présidence Charge du Plan – Direction de la Statistique, des Etudes Economiques et Démographiques, will be studied and the mortality rates adjusted to better show the disparity between the crude mortality rates for Chad and prison mortality rate.

Appendix 1: Situation Journals

Figure 6

Breakdown of Situation Journal documents by year

Year	Count	Proportion
Unknown	9	1.05
1983	126	14.77
1984	122	14.30
1985	99	11.61
1986	252	29.54
1987	175	20.52
1988	70	8.21

Figure 1 shows the number of Situation Journals entered into the database for the entire period (1982-1990). Note that 62% of the Situation Journal documents fall between 1985 and 1987.

Figure 7

Breakdown of Situation Journals by day of week

Day of week	Count
Unknown	3
Monday	90
Tuesday	88
Wednesday	84
Thursday	81
Friday	96
Saturday	84

Figure 2 shows the reporting density by day of the week for Situation Journal documents in the database.

Appendix 2: DDS document classification

Class	Heading	Subheading	
(G) General - Documents on the functioning of the DDS (182)			
(N) Nominations, appointments and suspensions of agents (58)			
(P) Personnel lists, salary and job assignments of agents (124)			
(S) Specific - Documents originating from within the DDS concerning different types of information, particularly lists of the detained, dead, etc. (2305)			
(CD) Certificates of death	(D) Detainees (178)		
	(PG) Prisoners of war (187)		
(LD) Lists of detainees	(D) Detainees (200)		
	(PG) Prisoners of war (96)		
(AL) Movement of detainees	(A) Arrests (76)		
	(T) Transfers	(D) Detainees (83) (PG) Prisoners of war (36)	
	(ML) Released (130)		
(SJ) Situation journals (854)			
(CO) Correspondence - out	(HH) To Hissène Habré (377)		
(NI) Internal notes	(R) Reports		
	(PR) Reports on the prisons	(PR) Periodic (10) (PC) Specific (34)	
	(SG) Reports on the situation in general	(PR) Periodic (36) (PC) Specific (4)	
(FI) Information sheets: Intelligence on individuals, groups, foreign countries, embassies, etc. (4)			
(PV) Oral trial			
(MT) Telex messages			
(D) Various			
(AS) Other sources: Archived DDS documents originating from outside sources (358)			
(OI) Origin of the document known			
(OC) Origin unknown	(AI) Amnesty International		
	(CR) Red Cross		
	(HH) Hissène Habré/Office of the President (14)		
	(MI) Ministry of the Interior	(HH) To Hissène Habré (211)	
		(A) To other recipients (5)	
	(DF) Defense/army (14)	(HH) To Hissène Habré	
		(A) To other recipients	
	(PF) Prefectures		
	(ACC) Accords		
	(UNIR) Union Nationale pour l'Indépendance et la Révolution	(HH) To Hissène Habré	
		(A) To other recipients	
	(A) Other (14)	(OFF) Official sources	
(HH) To Habré		(A) To others	
(N-OFF) To non-official recipients			
(HH) To Habré		(A) To others	