

PERSONAL TESTIMONY OF HAMIDOU HASSAN

November 2011

Introduction

Baba Ahmadou Danpullo has persecuted my family for many years. Even though he was married to my sister, he seized our lands, chased away our late father Ardo Hassan from Ndawara and imprisoned my brothers Mumini and Elh. Ahmadou. He confiscated cattle belong to my other brother Musa. To make matters worse he ordered the detention of our mother Hadja Kabo for visiting my brother Mumini who he jailed in prison in Wum. He has ridiculed and impoverished our family and the other members of our community and hurt our dignity and abused us for many years. Here is a summary of my ordeal with Baba.

My abduction

On 8th April 1998, at about 3a.m. in the morning while my family and I were fast asleep gendarmes from Bamenda acting on orders of Baba Ahmadou Danpullo, came to my home in Sabga to arrest me. They used an opening in the widow to my bed room and sprayed some gas into my room which immediately started hurting us. I opened the door and there were seven men and one of them pointed a gun at me and they abducted me and bundled into their vehicle. They did not show me an arrest warrant and they did not tell me why I was being taken away or who they were. I was not issued a summons or fail to attend a court hearing. My family were also confused as to what was happening as they thought it was armed robbers.

My family looked for me for two days day and night before they were informed by someone that I am in BMM Up Station Bamenda.

The day after my abduction, the Lamido of Sabga, Elh. Adamou Sabga wrote a complaint to police in Tubah. After investigations they informed him that their service was not aware of my case.

My arbitrary detention

I was taken to BMM Bamenda where I was detained. The police told me that Baba Ahmadou Danpullo had instructed that none of my family members should be allowed to visit me. During the first two days I was not given any food. Later on I was allowed only one visitor a day. I fell ill but was refused medical attention contrary to the law. I was allowed to eat only once a day at a time determined by the police.

On the fifth day of my detention policemen came into my cell at mid night and started questioning me. They said I should accept that I stole cows belonging to one Governor (Fai Yengo Francis) and eight other individuals. They said if I did not confess to this crime they will seize my cows. I refused to confess to these trumped

up charges and they tried to coerce me to accept but I stood my grounds. To cause me to accept they took away my cloths, mattress and beddings.

A few days after this the police came to my cell to inform me that Baba Ahmadou Danpullo has instructed them to go and collect all my cattle. On arrival they found out that my family have moved the cattle to somewhere else.

A week later Baba Ahmadou Danpullo decided to lead a group of his workers to Sabga to collect the cattle himself. However, he received information that my family were willing to defend our property to death if necessary and he changed his mind.

High Court Rules my detention illegal and orders my release

While I was in detention my lawyer filed an application for bail for me on health grounds plus the fact that the offence which I am supposed accused of is a bailable offence. The Gendarme Commander of BMM refused to take me to court as requested by the High Court of Mezam. On the 9th of July after two months of my illegal detention, and two adjournments the High Court ordered my release. After strongly condemning the forces of law and order for my illegal arrest and detention and the forces of law and order for defying the Court, His Lordship Mr. Justice R.T. Wanki Ruled as follows:

“In the light of the forgoing this Court Orders and is hereby Ordered as follows:

1. The detention of Hamidou Hassan is declared to be illegal.
2. That the Commander of BMM Bamenda shall immediately release Hamidou Hassan who is detained by him in the BMM Cell, without any further condition.
3. That there shall be no order or costs.
4. That the above order shall be carried out forthwith.”

It is shocking that the Commander of the BMM, a senior law enforcement Officer chooses to take orders from Baba Ahmadou Danpullo instead of the High Court! He ignored this ruling and later on relied on my swearing on Qur’an to release me.

My release

After spending three months in horrible and illegal detention they realised that I was not going to confess to a crime I have not committed. Baba Ahmadou Danpullo accompanied by the Commissioner of Police took me to the Central Mosque in Old Town Bamenda where they forced me to swear on the Qur’an that I did not steal the Governor’s cows. I swore and I was released.

After my release

After my release I protested my arrest and detention by filing complaints to the appropriate authorities at regional and national level but rod at I have not received a response.

In 2003, the government set up an Inter-Ministerial Commission (the Jani Commission) to investigate into the human rights abuses against the Mbororo by Baba Ahmadou Danpullo. I provided evidence to this Commission but ever since there has been no action take.

Conclusion

I urge the Cameroon government to:

1. Take action to provide redress to me and others in similar situations.
2. Hold those who illegally arrested, tortured and imprisoned me to account.
3. Fully and swiftly implement the Jani Commission Report.