

## Chad: Two CAR refugee students receive their doctorate degree in medicine in N'Djamena



*Laureate Aminata SILLA had a great feeling of joy and she thanked Chad for giving them the opportunity and creating the conditions for them to continue their studies with confidence, UNHCR / I. Diané*

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Saturday, October 28, 2017 will forever be a memorable day for two Central African refugee students. They had their dream come true by obtaining their doctorate in medicine at the Faculty of Human Health Sciences at the University of Ndjamen, overcoming the hardships of their refugee situation.

Fleeing violence in their country, the Central African Republic, in 2014, Aminata Silla, 27, and Ousmane Gamarko Sossal, 30, were far from imagining that they could resume their studies and finish them.

Thanks to their persistence, they managed to enrol in the Faculty of Human Health Sciences of the University of N'Djamena, a few months after their arrival in N'Djamena, in 2014. They continued their studies from level 6, to finally present their doctoral theses of medicine on Thursday, October 26, 2017.



*Ousmane Gamarko Sossal receiving his doctoral degree*

Having finished writing their theses since 2016, it took almost a year of waiting. Due to the economic crisis Chad is facing, the faculty took time to mobilise the resources in order to convene an international jury.

Under the direction of an international jury made up of eminent teachers and researchers including UNAIDS Country Director Professor Mame Hawa

Faye, and in the presence of a host of family and friends, Ousmane Gamarko Sossal was the first on Saturday morning to defend his thesis on the "Epidemiological and Diagnostic Aspects of Hepatocellular Carcinoma at the N'Djamena National Reference Hospital".

A little later in the afternoon, it was Aminata Silla's turn to present her research on the "Clinical and Etiological Aspects of Chronic Cervical Tumefaction".

The jury members noted that the topics chosen by the two students were more than relevant given the limited number of their specialists in the country. One of them highlighted the fact there were only three specialists in Oto-Rhino-Laryngologist for the 13 million Chadians, during at the thesis defence of Aminata Silla. She has indicated her intention to specialize "in order to help the many women affected by this disease whose best-known form is goitre".



*Aminata Silla at the defence of her thesis*

At the end of his thesis defence session, Ousmane, visibly moved, explains that he "always wanted to be a doctor to contribute to the well-being of humanity. Now I'm dreaming of one day going back to CAR to take care of all my countrymen who will be affected by this kind of liver cancer," he concluded, with tears in his eyes, before joining his family who came to celebrate his achievement.



*Aminata, surrounded by family members, friends and UNHCR staff, who came to support her for her thesis defence*

The two young Central African refugees were among the 50 laureates of the 18th class to receive their parchments during the official ceremony of deliberation and awarding of doctorate in medicine.

This ceremony, held under the patronage of the Ministry of Higher Education, Research and Innovation, took place on Saturday, October 28, 2017 in the amphitheatre of

the human health sciences of the University of N'Djamena in the presence of authorities, teachers, relatives, friends and many curious.

A ceremony highly awaited by the students who had for the first (Ousmane Gamarko) the **very honourable mention** and for the second (Aminata Silla), the **very honourable mention with congratulation of the jury**.

The 2013 intercommunal conflicts in the Central African Republic caused an umpteenth influx of Central African refugees in Chad. Among them were youngsters at the end of secondary school and students forced to stop studying.

Motivated and committed to continue and finish their studies, these young people will be accepted in various higher education institutions and faculties of the University of N'Djamena including that of human health sciences. It welcomed seventeen young refugees initially, including the two aforementioned applicants. Two others defended their thesis in 2014 and work at some NGOs.

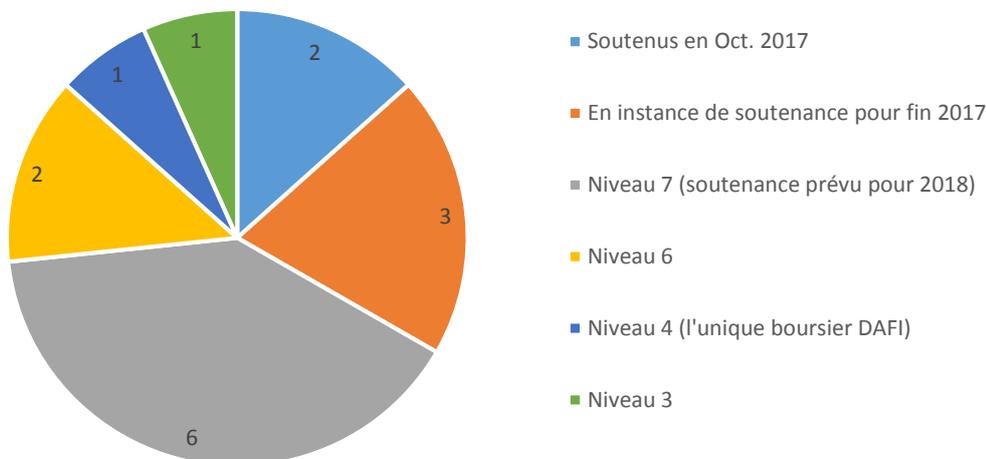


*Ousmane proudly presents his thesis alongside the UNHCR Education Officer (wearing a coat)*

In 2015, there were a total of seven regularly enrolled at level 7 in the Faculty of Human Health Sciences.

Faced with the difficulties they were experiencing for research, the drafting of theses and especially the statistical analysis of the data, UNHCR, at the initiative of its then

## Les 15 étudiants en médecine selon les niveaux, Oct. 2017



Representative, Jose Canhandula, set up a computer centre in its Branch Office in N'Djamena.

The UN refugee Agency also decided to grant the students financial support for the costs of data analysis and thesis printing.

This approach was adopted because these young people are an important breeding ground for both Chad and their country of origin, which they dream of serving once peace is restored there.

While welcoming the academic achievements of the young refugees, the current UNHCR Representative, Mbili Ambaoumba, expressed the wish to see more of them including camps reach higher education. "And for that we need more ways to support them, especially through scholarships like the DAFI's offered by the German government," he said in an appeal for more supports./.