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Trends. Hissen Habre and Human Rights: Right or Wrong?

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Hissen Habre has been indicted on torture charges by a Senegalese court and criminal adjudication is ongoing in Senegal. Of special note is that the charges refer to alleged misbehaviors in Chad, not Senegal, by a former Chadian president. As such, this case becomes the first significant fallout of the ongoing legal activities involving Spain's extradition request for former Chilean president Augusto Pinochet. This request already has been the catalyst for the precedent that former national leaders can be prosecuted outside their countries for some violations of human rights committed within their countries.

Although supporters of human rights might ascribe to the Habre prosecution proof that even the highest authorities can be held accountable for human rights violations, one must note that the highest in this case and the Pinochet case have not been formally indicted. The highest authorities in both cases are the political actors that provided instrumental political, economic, and security support for Habre and Pinochet. These authorities include political leaders (at the time of Habre's and Pinochet's human rights violations) of the United States and other Western nation-states who often have been the most formidable moral advocates and arbiters for human rights and accountability for their violation.

Should one agitate for a Terror that brings all morally culpable authorities to a figurative guillotine? Maybe not, but the story on accountability for national leaders still comprises an open chapter. (See African dictator faces trial where he once took refuge. (March 1, 2000). *The New York Times*, p. A3; Frink, D.D., & Ferris, G.R. (1998). Accountability, impression management, and goal setting in the performance evaluation process. *Human Relations*, 51, 1259-1283; Gefland, M.J., & Realo, A. (1999). Individualism-collectivism and accountability in inter-group negotiations. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 84, 721-736; O'Connor, K.M. (1997). Groups and solos in context: The effects of accountability on team negotiation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 72, 384-407; Prasad, M. (1999). The morality of market exchange: Love, money, and contractual justice. *Sociological Perspectives*, 42, 181-214.) (Keywords: Chad, Hissen Habre, Human Rights, Pinochet, Senegal, Torture.)