

# SUDAN

## Political Repression in Eastern Sudan

Since January 2005, human rights violations by the Sudanese authorities in Eastern Sudan are fuelling tensions and discontent, which could lead to further human rights abuses.

The Sudanese government must respond to the situation in Eastern Sudan by protecting human rights and providing accountability for human rights violations. Failure to do so in other regions, such as Darfur, has led to armed conflict, massive human rights violations, the forced displacement of millions of civilians now dependent solely on external aid, and international condemnation of the government.

Eastern Sudan, with the Red Sea State, which capital is Port Sudan, and Kassala State, with Kassala town as its capital, is one of the poorest regions of Sudan. It is inhabited mainly by the Beja and the Rashaida, two nomadic ethnic groups, southern and western Sudanese internally displaced as a result of conflict and refugees from neighbouring Eritrea and Ethiopia.

Eastern Sudanese, like southern and western Sudanese, complain of underdevelopment and marginalisation by the central government. With the signature on 9 January 2005 of the Sudan Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) of southern Sudan, the Eastern Sudanese, excluded from the peace negotiations, are demanding a share in power and resources.

### Unlawful killings of demonstrators

On 26 January 2005, peaceful Beja demonstrators in Port Sudan presented a list of demands to the Red Sea State Governor, asking him to respond to their memorandum within 72 hours.

On 29 January, a second demonstration took place. Government security forces reportedly used live ammunition against demonstrators allegedly armed with sticks and stones. The security forces also attacked houses outside the area of the demonstration, and reportedly threw grenades inside houses which wounded residents, including children. At least 20

people were killed in the clashes. A similar protest was reported in Kassala town, leading to arrests and the reported beating of two students by the security forces.

Amnesty International condemned the killings and the excessive and indiscriminate use of force by the security forces in Port Sudan. These contravene international human rights standards which state that police and security forces may only resort to intentional lethal use of firearms when strictly necessary to protect life.

Amnesty International also called on the Sudanese government to immediately set up an independent and impartial commission of inquiry into the killings in Port Sudan and to bring to justice those that used or ordered the use of excessive lethal force.

On 17 February 2005, the Sudanese Minister of Interior, Major-General Abdel Rahim Mohamed Hussein, set up a commission of inquiry headed by a judge to investigate the Port-Sudan clashes. Prior to that, the Governor of the Red Sea state, Khatem al-Sirr al-Wasila, ordered a committee to investigate the situation. Three months later, the findings of these commissions have not been published.

### Prolonged detentions without charge of political opponents

Scores of Beja were subsequently arrested between 29 January and 13 February by members of the National Security and Intelligence Agency in Port Sudan and Kassala. While the exact number of arrests is unknown, the semi official Sudanese Media Centre stated on 3 March that 199 of those arrested had been released and that four would be sent to court.

However, 16 members of the Beja Congress party have remained for more than three months now in detention without charge

1. Abdallah Musa Abdallah (m), Beja Congress Secretary General Secretary in Red Sea State
2. Hashim Ali Dura (m) (Port Sudan)
3. Abdel Rahim Ali Bur'i (m) (Port Sudan)

4. Aderob Bakkash (m), aged 22, student (Kassala)
5. Khalifa Omar Ohajj (m), aged 23, student (Kassala)
6. Ali Hussein Ali (m), aged 40, self-employed (Kassala)
7. Mohamed Samra (m), aged 40, self employed (Kassala)
8. Hussein Adam (m), aged 35 (Kassala)
9. Dr Onour Seedy, arrested in Port Sudan on 30 January
10. Mohamed Al-Amin Mohamed Tahir, arrested on 13 February in Port Sudan
11. Mohamed Habib Mohamed Tahir (m), arrested on 13 February in Port Sudan,
12. Dirar Mohamed Dirar (m), known as Shiba, arrested in Port Sudan
13. Hashim Odis (m)
14. Omer Bamkar (m)
15. Taj Al-Sirr Badri (m)
16. Mohamed Musa Issa (m)

They are detained in Dabak prison, North of Khartoum, notorious for poor conditions of detention, and only four have received visits from their families or a Beja Congress official. Dr Mahmoud Osman Ibrahim, the Secretary General of the Beja Congress in Kassala, arrested with the other 16, was released in April 2005 after more than two months in detention without charge.

### **Rising tensions in Eastern Sudan**

Since the 1990s, there has been sporadic armed conflict in Eastern Sudan between the government army and the armed wing of the opposition, composed of the largest southern armed group SPLM, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA, an umbrella of northern opposition parties hosted by Eritrea including the eastern-based Sudan Alliance Forces and one segment of the Beja Congress which supports armed opposition). Some areas, in particular round Hameshkoreb and near the Eritrean border, are under the armed opposition.

**Take action for human rights to be respected in Eastern Sudan!**

### **WRITE TO THE SUDAN GOVERNMENT CALLING ON IT TO:**

- Immediately publish the findings and recommendations of the Commission of Inquiry into the Port-Sudan clashes;
- suspend, pending further investigations and fair trials, any member of the security forces suspected to have ordered or used excessive or indiscriminate lethal force;

- provide restitution, compensation and guarantees of non-repetition to those wounded and the relatives of those killed in the January demonstration;
- release the 16 detainees named above, unless they are promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a fair trial, without the possibility of the death penalty or cruel, inhumane or degrading punishment;
- respect freedom of expression and assembly and the right not to be arbitrarily detained, according to commitments made in the CPA.

### **► Please send your appeals to**

- Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha  
First Vice-President  
President's Palace  
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax: + 249 11 771025/779977  
Salutation: Dear Minister

- Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
PO Box 873, Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax : + 249 11 779383  
Salutation: Dear Minister

- Dr Abdel Moneim Taha  
Advisory Council for Human Rights  
PO Box 302, Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax: + 249 11 779173/770883  
Email:  
Salutation: Dear Sir

- Mr Khatem al-Sirr al-Wasila  
Governor of Red Sea State  
Governor's Residence  
Port Sudan, Sudan  
Fax: + 249 183 779977  
Salutation: Dear Governor

### **Please also send appeals to your own government, asking them to**

- Put pressure on the Government of Sudan to demonstrate its commitment to human rights under the CPA by making public the Commissions of Inquiry reports, bringing to justice those responsible for unlawful killings of demonstrators in Port-Sudan, and ending the prolonged detention without charge of Eastern Sudanese.

<http://www.amnesty.org>

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