

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 54/05/97

UA 23/97 Fear of torture / possible prisoners of conscience

23 January 1997

SUDAN al-Tijani Mustapha, lawyer  
Farouq Kadoda, lecturer  
Mahjoub al-Zubeir, trade unionist  
al-Hadi Abdel Aziz  
Taha Sid Ahmad, trade unionist  
Salah Abdel Karim, economist  
Adam Madibu, former minister  
al-Fadl Mahir  
Mohamed Suleiman, trade unionist  
Abdel Jalil Karoma, worker  
Mohamed Dia'a al-Din, trade unionist  
Ali Khalifa, trade unionist  
Mansour Hassan, imam  
Mohamed Babiker Mokhtar, trade unionist  
Nur al-Din Medani, office manager al-Khaleej newspaper

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The 15 men named above are among scores of alleged government opponents who have been arbitrarily arrested in Khartoum, Sudan's capital, since 13 January 1997 (see UA 13/97, AFR 54/02/97; UA 20/97, AFR 54/03/97; UA 21/97, AFR 54/04/97). All 15 are being detained without charge or trial in Khartoum. It is not known where they are being held, but some may be in a section of Kober Prison, Khartoum's main prison, run by the security service. Amnesty International fears that the men are at risk of torture and ill-treatment and is concerned that they may be prisoners of conscience.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The political atmosphere in Sudan has become increasingly tense since 12 January 1997 when armed forces linked to the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) invaded eastern Sudan and captured the border town of Kurmuk. The NDA is a grouping of political parties banned in 1989 after the current government seized power in a military coup. It is calling for an uprising to oust the government - on 21 January 1997 Sadiq al-Mahdi, Sudan's Prime Minister overthrown in 1989, called on the police and army to rise against the authorities. The Sudanese government, which has ordered a general mobilisation, has accused the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments of supporting the rebel offensive. Both governments have denied that they are doing so. Fighting is reported to be continuing.

On 14 January 1997, Gaspàr Birò, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Sudan, was expelled from the country by the government on the pretext that it could not guarantee his safety.

Anyone detained by the Sudanese security authorities is at risk of ill-treatment and torture, in particular during interrogation in security offices. In the past the authorities have blamed torture and ill-treatment on undisciplined security officials. Amnesty International's information, however, is that torture and ill-treatment in security force custody are systematic.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Please send telegrams/telexes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- expressing concern at the detention without charge of the 15 men (name them), who may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned only for their suspected opposition to the Sudan Government;
- seeking assurances that the detainees are not being tortured or ill-treated;
- urging that they be given immediate and regular access to their families, legal representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- appealing for them to be released if they are not to be charged with recognizable criminal offences and brought promptly to a fair trial.

**APPEALS TO:**

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir  
President of the Republic of the Sudan  
People's Palace  
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan  
**Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

2) Mr 'Abd al-Basit Sabdarat  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Ministry of Justice  
Khartoum, Sudan  
**Telegrams: Minister of Justice 'Abd al-Basit Sabdarat, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Telexes: c/o 22411 KAID SD or 22604 IPOL SD**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

3) Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
PO Box 873  
Khartoum, Sudan  
**Telegrams: Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

1) Mr Obeid Haj Ali  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court  
Khartoum, Sudan

2) Mr Ahmad al-Mufti  
Secretary  
Advisory Council for Human Rights  
PO Box 302  
Khartoum, Sudan

and to diplomatic representatives of Sudan accredited to your country.

**PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY.** Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 6 March 1997.