

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 54/11/96

UA 140/96 Fear of torture / Possible prisoners of conscience 11 June 1996

SUDAN Mahjoub al-Zubeir, former president of the Sudanese Workers Trade Union Federation (SWTUF)

Yahya Ali Abdallah, former SWTUF secretary general

Nasur Ali Nasur, former SWTUF treasurer

Awad al-Karim Mohamed Ahmed, trade unionist, engineer

Minallah Abdelwahab Eissa, former SWTUF press officer

Yahya Saleh Mukwar, medical doctor and former Doctors

Union official

These six trade unionists, who have all been active in clandestine opposition trade union activities since independent trade unions were banned in Sudan, were arrested in Khartoum on 4 June 1996. They have not been brought to court or charged. Their current whereabouts are not known but they are believed to be held by the security authorities in secret detention centres known as "ghost houses", where torture of political detainees is common.

All six have been detained previously, particularly in round-ups of leftist and liberal opposition activists, and had been reporting regularly to the security authorities. Dr Yayha Saleh Mukwar has been detained six times before and was last released only in May 1996.

Amnesty International believes they may be prisoners of conscience, arrested for their non-violent opposition to the government, and fears they are at risk of being tortured or ill-treated.

For further background information, see *Sudan: Progress or public relations?*, AFR 54/06/96, 29 May 1996.

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

- expressing concern at the detention without charge or trial of these six trade unionists, who may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their non-violent opinions and political activities;
- asking for assurances that they are not being tortured or ill-treated;
- urging that their whereabouts in custody are publicly disclosed, and that they are given immediate and regular access to their families, legal representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- appealing for them to be released immediately unless they are to be promptly charged with a recognizably criminal offence and given a fair and early 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:

Mr Obeid Haj Ali
Chief Justice
Law Courts
Khartoum, Sudan

Chairman of the Human Rights Committee
National Assembly
Omdurman, 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 11 August 1996