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UA 27/05 **Arbitrary arrest/ Fear for Safety/Torture**

02 February 2005

SUDAN **Abdallah Musa Abdallah (m), General Secretary of the Beja Congress in Red Sea State**
Dr Mahmoud Osman Ibrahim (m) aged 45, General Secretary of the Beja Congress in
Kassala
Hashem Ali Dura (m) (Port Sudan)
Abdel Rahim Ali Bur'i (m) (Port Sudan)
Aderob Bakkash, aged 22, student (Kassala)
Khalifa Omar Ohajj, aged 23, student (Kassala)
Ali Hussein Ali (m), aged 40, self-employed (Kassala)
Mohamed Samra (m), aged 40, self employed (Kassala)
Hussein Adam (m), aged 35 (Kassala)
Scores of others, names unknown

The nine men named above and scores of others are reportedly being held at national security offices in the cities of Port Sudan and Kassala, Red Sea State, Eastern Sudan. Aderob Bakkash and Khalifa Omar Ohajj have reportedly been tortured while in detention in Kassala. Amnesty International is concerned for their safety and that of other detainees, who are all members of the Beja ethnic group.

The arrests follow demonstrations on 26 and 29 January in Port Sudan predominantly by members of the Beja ethnic group, who were calling for equal opportunities and a share of power in the region. Demonstrations on 26 January were peaceful and culminated in a list of demands being presented to the Governor of Red Sea State, who was given 72 hours to respond. (See News Service No. 024, AFR 54/014/2005, *Sudan: Those responsible for indiscriminate Port Sudan killings must be brought to justice*, 31 January 2005)

However, on 29 January armed security forces reportedly used live ammunition against a demonstration which allegedly turned violent. They then attacked houses outside the area of the demonstrations, and reportedly threw grenades which wounded residents including children. At least 20 people were killed.

Between 29 January and 1 February scores of arrests took place. Those detained included leaders and members of the Beja Congress, an opposition political party which calls for an end to discrimination and an equal share of power, wealth and resources within Sudan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The demonstrations in Port Sudan followed the crisis in Darfur, Western Sudan, where more than 1.65 million people were forcibly displaced and more than 50,000 killed, after armed groups protested at the marginalization of sedentary people in the region.

A Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed on 9 January 2005, ending the 21-year conflict between the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the Khartoum Government in southern Sudan. However, marginalized groups from northern and eastern Sudan, as well as those in Darfur, feel that they have been excluded from the peace agreement.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English and Arabic or your own language:

- asking for an immediate independent investigation into the reported torture in detention of Aderob Bakkash and Khalifa Omar Ohajj in Kassala, Red Sea State, Eastern Sudan;
- seeking assurances that they and other detainees will not be further tortured or ill-treated;

- calling for all the members of the Beja ethnic group in detention to be given immediate access to family, legal counsel and any medical attention they may need;
- asking for them to be released or be promptly charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a fair trial;
- calling for the authorities to immediately set up an independent and impartial commission of inquiry into the killings in Port Sudan and for those that used or ordered the use of excessive lethal force to be brought to justice.

APPEALS TO: (Fax numbers may be difficult to get through to. Please send letters instead and include the Sudanese embassy in your country)

Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
First Vice-President
People's Palace, PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 183 771025
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 183 779383
Salutation: Dear Minister

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

COPIES TO:

El Tayeb Harun Ali
Head of Complaints Committee
Human Rights Advisory Council
Fax: +249 183 781343
Salutation: Dear Sir

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 16 March 2005