

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 162/92

Legal Concern/ Fear of Torture

15 May 1992

SUDAN:

Hassan Osman, politician
Dr Mohamad al-Gadi, pharmacist
Mustapha Zaki Mustapha, politician
and
Abdallah Barakat - lay preacher

Hassan Osman, Mohamed al-Gadi and Mustapha Zaki Mustapha, members of the banned Sudan Communist Party (SCP), were arrested in Khartoum on 29 April 1992 on allegations of possessing leaflets and copies of the al-Maidan newspaper, an SCP newspaper banned by the government, which is now published underground.

The government considers the banned publication to be seditious literature, and anyone convicted of possessing it faces the death penalty.

Abdallah Barakat, a prominent member of the Ansar sect and supporter of the banned Umma party, was arrested at the start of May 1992 and is reported to be held in incommunicado detention at security headquarters in Khartoum. Mohamed al-Mahdi, the official imam (religious leader) of the Ansar Mosque in Sudan's second city of Omdurman and a critic of the government, was detained at the same time but was released after 10 days. It is not known why either of these men were arrested, but there are reports that a number of prominent Ansar have been called to report to the security headquarters over recent weeks.

Amnesty International is concerned that the four men who remain in detention could be tortured or ill-treated in detention. The place of detention of the three members of the banned SCP is unknown. It is believed, however, that they are being held either in the security headquarters in Khartoum or in secret detention centres known in Sudan as "ghost houses" where torture is widely reported.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture and ill-treatment are routine in "ghost houses" and the security headquarters. Amnesty International has been able to confirm the torture in detention centres of more than 100 people arrested since November 1989. One of their victims, Ali Fadul, a medical doctor, is reported to have died as a result of torture on 22 April 1990 (see UA 164/90, AFR 54/22/90). More recently, over 75 civilians and former and serving army officers arrested in late August 1991 in connection with an alleged coup attempt, were reportedly tortured in "ghost houses". An elderly prisoner was bound and suspended by his wrists from the walls of his cell on three consecutive nights. A civilian prisoner is reported to have had the flesh from his heels sliced off. There are reports of prisoners being whipped, of others having their testicles crushed with pliers and of yet others being burnt by hot irons.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the arrests of Hassan Osman, Dr Mohamad al-Gadi, Mustapha Zaki Mustapha and Abdallah Barakat whom Amnesty International believes may be prisoners of conscience;
- expressing concern at their continuing incommunicado detention without charge or trial, and fear that they may be being tortured;

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- seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated, that their whereabouts in custody are made public and that they have immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and any necessary medical attention;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1. His Excellency Lieutenant General
Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the NSRCC
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD; 22411 KAID SD
[Salutation: Your Excellency]

2. Brigadier-General al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior
and Deputy Chairman of the NSRCC
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Brig-Gen al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD; 22604 IPOL SD
[Salutation: Dear Brigadier-General]

3. Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD; 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
[Salutation: Dear Minister]

COPIES OF YOUR APPEALS TO:

Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi
Chief Justice
Law Courts
Khartoum
Sudan

Mr Ali Sahloul
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO BOX 873, Khartoum
Sudan

and to diplomatic representatives of Sudan in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 June 1992.