

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of torture/Legal Concern

18 May 1993

SUDAN:

Abdelrahman al-Khair Abdelwahab, farmer
Mamoun Yousif, member of the Ansar religious order
Abdel Ghani Mohamed Omar al-Amir, member of Umma party
Gibreel al-Awad Salim, trade unionist
Ali Yousif, member of Umma party
Ahmad Bilal, member of Umma party

Amnesty International has received reports of further arrests in May 1993 of members of the banned Umma party and the Ansar religious order, a traditional sect in Sudanese Islam, in what appears to be a nationwide crackdown against suspected government opponents. The Umma party is led by former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, whose great grandfather, Mohamed Ahmad al-Mahdi, founded the Ansar.

Amnesty International is concerned that the detainees have been arrested solely for engaging in their internationally recognised fundamental right to freedom of expression and association and considers them to be prisoners of conscience.

The organization is also concerned that as suspected opponents of the government they are likely to undergo interrogation with a high risk of torture. Their places of detention are as yet unknown, however others arrested recently are reported to be held in secret detention centres, known as "ghost houses" in Sudan.

Abdelrahman al-Khair Abdelwahab, a farmer, and Mamoun Yousif, the resident representative of the Ansar Imam, were both arrested in Kassala in eastern Sudan. Abdelrahman al-Khair Abdelwahab's arrest is thought to be linked to the political activities of his brother, Nagib al-Khair, who is a prominent member of the Sudanese opposition in exile.

Abdel Ghani Mohamed Omar al-Amir was arrested in Ad-Damer, a town approximately 170 miles north of Khartoum.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Since mid-April several other members of the Umma Party and Ansar sect have been arrested in Khartoum and provincial towns and cities such as el-Obeid, Ad-Damazin, Ad-Dueim, Wad Medani and Nyala (see UA 158/93, AFR 54/17/93, 17 May 1993).

The recent crackdown on Umma and Ansar members began on 5 April 1993 when Sadiq al-Mahdi was held for 24 hours for questioning. On 25 March 1993 he gave a speech during the 'Id feast to mark the end of Ramadan in which he called for a return to a multi-party political system in Sudan. On 9 April 1993 a demonstration took place in Omdurman after Friday prayers led by Sadiq al-Mahdi.

There are reports that dozens of others were arrested during and after the demonstration and subjected to beatings in the course of being interrogated.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest in May 1993 of the individuals above (please select two or three names) who appear to Amnesty International to be prisoners of conscience, that is people imprisoned solely because of exercising their internationally recognised rights to freedom of expression and freedom of association;

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- expressing concern at their continuing detention without charge or trial and fear that they may be subjected to torture;
- urging that they are being humanely treated, that their whereabouts in custody be 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.

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General
Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Husayn
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior
and Deputy Chairman of the National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Brig-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammed Husayn, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

3) Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi
Chief Justice
Law Courts
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Hussein Suleiman Abu Salih
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

Dr A. al-Mufti
Secretary of Human Rights Commission*
Khartoum, Sudan

* The Human Rights Commission is a government-backed body, nominally independent, apparently created to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda.

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 29 June 1993.