

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 54/31/95

UA 218/95

Prisoners of Conscience/Fear of Torture 15 September 1995

SUDAN Mustapha Abdel Gadir, lawyer

Mohamed Ali al-Sayid, lawyer

Bushra Abdel Karim, lawyer

On 12 September 1995 Mustapha Abdel Gadir and Mohamed Ali al-Said were arrested in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan. The men, both prominent lawyers, are reported to be detained without charge or trial by the security services in a wing of Kober prison, the main prison in Khartoum. Bushra Abdel Karim, another lawyer, is believed to have been arrested at the same time. All men are known critics of the government and have played a leading role in defending government opponents brought before the courts on criminal charges. Amnesty International is concerned that they have been arrested because of their history of non-violent political activity and that they are at risk of torture.

Amnesty International's concern is intensified because the arrests took place as student demonstrations led to rioting on the streets of Khartoum and, reportedly, other major cities. This has resulted in a widespread clampdown on political opponents by the authorities, who have accused communists, leftists and "foreigners" of being responsible for organizing the protests. There is no reliable evidence that the men named above played any role in the rioting.

Some political prisoners detained in connection with the riots are believed to have been badly beaten. One young man was reportedly held briefly by security men who broke both his arms. An intermediate school student arrested on 12 September is understood to have been beaten in incommunicado detention before being dumped from a vehicle outside his home on the evening of 14 September.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The demonstrations, which began on 11 September, are the largest street protests to have taken place in Sudan since the military government seized power on 30 June 1989. They appear to have been sparked off by the arrest of 23 students and others on 2 September 1995 and widespread discontent with the economic situation. University of Khartoum students keeping vigil on the main university campus on 9 September, who were calling for the release of colleagues, were reportedly attacked by pro-government students with knives. In the course of the demonstrations held between 11 and 14 September, government supporters, some reportedly armed, attacked demonstrators and police and plainclothes security officials fired live ammunition and tear gas. At least five people are reported to have been killed and many others wounded. Scores of people have been detained.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Mustapha Abdel Gadir, Mohamed Ali al-Sayid and Bushra Abdel Karim, who Amnesty International believes are prisoners of conscience, detained on account of their history of non-violent opposition to government policies;
- seeking assurances of their physical safety and guarantees that they are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;

- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released.

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

Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier Bakri Hassan Saleh

Minister of the Interior

People's Palace

PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

**Telegrams: Minister of the Interior Bakri Hassan Saleh,
Khartoum, Sudan**

Telexes: 22842 WZARA 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

Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddo

Minister of Justice and Attorney-General

Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Obeid Haj Ali

Chief Justice

Law Courts

Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Angelo Beda Bambara

Chairman of the Human Rights Committee

of the Transitional National Assembly (TNA)*

Omdurman, Sudan

* The TNA's Human Rights Committee was created by Sudan's government-appointed Transitional National Assembly in December 1992, apparently to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda. The Committee's Chairman has said that it investigates reports of human rights violations.

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 27 October 1995.