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SUMMARY

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Amnesty International remains concerned about more than 250 prisoners of conscience known to be in detention in Sudan. Since a new military government took power following a coup in June 1989 there have been extensive human rights violations in all parts of the country. Those arrested and held without trial have included politicians, trade unionists, academics, lawyers and medical professionals.

The attached external document contains information on the cases of the arrest of health professionals, some 19 of whom currently remain in detention. It describes the torture and ill-treatment of detainees, many reports of which have been received by Amnesty International, and contains information on the harsh conditions in remote Shallah prison in the western province of Darfur.

From testimony received by Amnesty International it would appear that the torture and ill-treatment of detainees has been frequent, most commonly occurring when detainees are held incommunicado in secret detention centres or "safe houses". Ali Fadul, a doctor in his thirties, is reported to have died as a result of torture in April 1990 while held in a secret detention centre. Reports of the ill-treatment of prisoners have, in some instances, been corroborated by medical examination.

One doctor was sentenced to death in December 1989 for organizing a 10-minute meeting to discuss a doctor's strike; he was later pardoned following considerable international pressure over his case.

Amnesty International has urged the government to release all prisoners of conscience, to ensure fair trials and to end the use of torture, ill-treatment and the death penalty.

This summarizes a 9-page document, Sudan: Health Workers and Human Rights (AI Index: AFR 54/35/90) issued by Amnesty International in September 1990. Anyone wanting further details or to take action on this issue should consult the full document.

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HEALTH WORKERS AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN SUDAN

Since the 30 June 1989 coup in Sudan which brought the military government led by Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir to power, several hundred people have been arrested. Many have been released uncharged, but more than 250 prisoners of conscience are still in detention, the majority without formal charge or trial, despite claims by government officials that no political prisoners were any longer being detained in Sudan. Since November 1989 Amnesty International has received many reports from various sources that prisoners of conscience have been tortured in a number of secret "safe houses" in Khartoum before being transferred to prison. The security forces are reported to be using a variety of buildings in Khartoum city centre and near the airport as secret detention centres. One such prisoner of conscience, Dr Ali Fadul, is reported to have died under torture on 22 April.

Another prisoner of conscience, Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein, was sentenced to death in December 1989 for his part in organizing a meeting at which a doctors' strike was declared. The deterioration in human rights in Sudan has prompted international protests. Thousands of individuals and numerous organizations appealed for the commutation of the death sentence imposed on Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein, until he was finally pardoned by the head of state and then released in early May 1990.

Further arrests were made in March and April 1990, army officers and senior members of the Umma Party [the party of the ousted Prime Minister, Sadiq al-Mahdi] being particular targets. Twenty-eight army officers were executed on 24 April - the day after the government announced that a coup attempt had been foiled. Other officers have received prison sentences after unfair summary trials. In May more than 20 government critics were arrested. Since the end of May some 46 members of the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party have been arrested and detained incommunicado. Arrests appear to be continuing on a regular basis.

Health personnel currently believed to remain in detention include:

Al-Fatih MALIK [doctor]	Kober prison (in Khartoum)
Madani Ahmed ISSA [doctor]	" "
Faissal ABDEL WAHAB [doctor]	" "
[lecturer in medicine, University of Gezira]	" "
Dia Eddine Mohamed AL-SAYED [doctor]	" "
Majhoub Mohamed TAHA [doctor]	" "
Abdel Latif Mohamed ZEIN [doctor]	" "
Abdel Muneim Hassan AL-SHEIKH [doctor]	" "
Montong Biong KWAL [doctor]	" "
Mukhtar Fadul AHMED [doctor]	" "
Sayed Mohamed ABDALLAH [doctor]	Place of detention unknown
Abdel Muneim SAADEDDINE [pharmacist]	Kober prison

Nagib NAGM EDDINE [doctor]	Shalla prison (in Darfur)
Taha Al-Haj KROM [doctor]	" "
Sayed Mukhtar AL-FEEL [pharmacist]	" "
Hamouda Fath AL-RAHMAN [doctor]	" "
Omar AL-NAGIB [orthopaedic surgeon]	" "
Magdi Ishag AHMED [doctor]	" "
Mirghani Ali HABIBALLA [doctor]	" "
Ahmed Abdel Mawla ABASHAR [pharmacist]	" "

Arrests of health personnel, July - December 1989

As soon as the new government assumed power it declared a nationwide state of emergency, banned all political parties and trade unions, dissolved parliament and suspended the constitution. All non-religious associations were banned. A month after the coup, on 31 July 1989, leaders of a number of trade unions and professional bodies presented a memorandum to the government calling for these organizations to be no longer proscribed. The Sudan Bar Association and the Association of Legal Advisers in the Attorney General's Chambers were among the memorandum's signatories. Eight trade unionists who signed the memorandum were arrested soon afterwards and in August and September 1989 some 40 other trade union activists were arrested too and the government replaced the leadership of many trade unions with pro-government appointees, leading to further protests.

On 21 October 1989, 11 political parties and 51 trade unions and professional associations signed the Charter of the National Democratic Forum calling for a return to democracy, and various trade unions and professional bodies submitted fresh memoranda to the government in late November and December 1989.

A further wave of arrests began in late November when a number of doctors were arrested after the banned Sudan Doctors' Union declared a seven-day strike in support of a memorandum it had submitted to the Minister of Health. Although a small group of doctors, called Patriotic Doctors (who also belonged to the Islamic Medical Association and were supporters of the National Islamic Front), denounced the strike, the majority of doctors joined in. Those who joined the strike ran a voluntary emergency service; one of them, **Dr Younis Saleh**, was arrested while he was at work. Dozens of doctors were arrested during and following the strike. Some were beaten up, lashed and blindfolded for several days on end and then released uncharged. Others, however, are still being detained and some of them are reported to have been tortured.

Among those arrested were four doctors who were charged with "participating in and calling for a strike" and also with "incitement to opposition against the government". The four, whose case is outlined below, have so far been the only doctors charged and tried in a court. (Two were acquitted and the other two later pardoned.)

Buthina Douka, a nursing sister in a Khartoum hospital, was among those arrested after the coup and was detained in Omdurman prison until she was released uncharged on 6 November 1989. She was apparently badly beaten and ill-treated in prison, and was kept tied up with ropes. She was said to have had a nervous breakdown as a result of this ill-treatment.

Further arrests of medical personnel in 1990 and death under torture

Dr Amal Jabrullah Said Ahmed was arrested in January 1990 because the military authorities suspected her of opposing their policies. She was detained without charge or trial in the women's prison in Omdurman until her release on 20 May 1990. She is married and has an 18-month-old child. Her journalist husband, Sidiq al-Zailai, was arrested in September 1989 and

remains in detention without charge or trial in Shalla Prison.

Dr Monytuoc Biong was arrested on 13 March 1990 and is still being detained without charge or trial in Kober prison.

Dr Ali Fadul, a prisoner of conscience who was arrested in March 1990, is reported to have died as a result of torture at a secret detention centre in Khartoum on 21 April 1990. He was an active member of the Sudan Doctors' Union.

It seems he was dismissed from his job after the doctors' strike in late November and early December 1989, then went underground for fear of arrest. His brother, **Dr Mukhtar Fadul**, who is also a physician, was then arrested and is still in Kober prison. On 13 March Dr Ali Fadul surrendered to the security service in the hope that his brother might be released. However he was immediately arrested and held in a secret detention centre for over a month. Dr Ali Fadul is reported to have died as a result of torture on 22 April 1990. His body was then taken to a Military Hospital at 3 a.m. by members of the security service who ordered doctors on duty to report the cause of death as being due to malaria.

No investigation or inquest into his reported torture seems to have been ordered. The authorities refused to show his body to his family and claimed that he died of malaria. Unofficial sources have, however, stated that he died as a result of an internal haemorrhage and a skull fracture which were caused by torture. His family was asked to take the body for burial without opening the coffin and the father was only allowed to see his son's feet in order to identify him. He refused to take his son's body unless an autopsy was carried out by a civilian hospital. The authorities refused his request and subsequently had the body buried. The family was not allowed to attend the burial.

Trials of doctors following their planned strike

Although dozens of doctors have been arrested since the coup only four have been brought to trial. **Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein**, **Dr Sayed Mohamed Abdallah**, **Dr Ja'far Mohamed Hussein** and **Dr Limov Gordon** were accused of holding a 10-minute meeting together in November 1989 to plan the doctors' strike. They were brought before a special court in Khartoum in December 1989 and denied proper legal representation. They were charged with "calling and organizing a strike" and with "incitement to opposition against the government", both of which became capital offences under the state of emergency legislation. (Since the new government came to power several fresh capital charges have been introduced and there have been at least 34 judicial executions.) On 10 December Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein was convicted on both charges and sentenced to death. Dr Sayed Mohamed Abdallah was sentenced to 15 years' imprisonment. The other two were acquitted on the grounds of insufficient evidence.

Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein is a gynaecologist in his early 50s, married with two children and a former official in the now banned Sudan Doctors' Union. Although it seemed in law he had a right to appeal to a higher court against his conviction and sentence, the head of state told journalists on 9 December that "sentences passed by special courts cannot be contested, including death sentences", and that he would not commute death sentences imposed by special courts. He also, apparently, announced on 13 December that the doctors' strike amounted to treason and that Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein deserved the death penalty and could not appeal against his sentence. This contrasts with the view expressed by the judge who presided over the special court which convicted Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein, who reportedly said the doctor was legally entitled to appeal against conviction. In response to appeals for the commutation of this death sentence, various government officials made suggestions in February and March 1990 that the death sentence had been commuted, although no

official announcement to that effect was made.

The second doctor convicted, Dr Sayed Mohamed Abdallah, was also denied the right to appeal to a higher court. He is 34 and belongs to the Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party in Sudan. He is known to have done voluntary work previously in Lebanon and on behalf of Eritrean refugees. Both doctors were apparently badly beaten and tortured after their arrest while they were in security service custody before being taken to Kober prison.

In early May 1990 both were pardoned by the head of state and subsequently released. However in early August 1990 Dr Sayed Mohamed Abdallah was reported to have been rearrested. The reasons for his current detention are not clear.

Nine other doctors and one pharmacist are still in Kober prison and eight other health professionals are detained in harsh conditions in Shalla prison in Darfur. None has been charged or brought to trial and they are denied any opportunity to challenge the legal grounds of their detention.

Evidence of torture and ill-treatment

Amnesty International has received many reports of the torture of prisoners of conscience arrested since November 1989. Some torture victims' testimonies have been corroborated by medical examination and suggest that torture is used frequently. These testimonies match other torture allegations received by Amnesty International from independent human rights activists and prisoners' families.

Torture and ill-treatment have evidently occurred mainly while prisoners were being kept incommunicado by the security service in various secret detention centres and "safe houses" in Khartoum.

Detainees have, it seems, been tortured to force them to admit involvement in political and trade union activities and to divulge information that could lead to the arrest of other government opponents. In some cases, however, prisoners were tortured as a punishment for their suspected opposition to the military government. Methods of ill-treatment and torture have included beating on arrival at the detention centre (described by torturers as "the first meal") and throughout detention; soaking in cold water; burning with cigarettes; suspension; forced adoption of uncomfortable postures; mock execution; sleep deprivation.

Amnesty International has received a variety of testimonies and other forms of information about the use of torture. A prominent doctor and active member of the Sudan Doctors' Union was arrested over the doctors' strike in late November 1989, taken blindfold to a "safe house" and kept in a room about three metres square with six other detainees. He was prevented from sleeping for several days. He was reported to have been burned with cigarettes and on several occasions beaten with pistol and rifle butts.

More evidence of torture was given in a letter dated 29 January 1990 from prisoner of conscience Dr Faruk Mohamed Ibrahim to the head of state describing the circumstances of his arrest and the torture he faced while in secret detention. He is a 62-year-old lecturer at Khartoum University who was arrested on 20 November 1989, apparently because the military authorities suspected him of opposing their policies.

In his letter he stated that "before, during and after the interrogation [on the evening of his arrest] I was subjected to physical torture which involved being beaten with shoes, being kicked and being slapped on the face, head and all over the body by people who were professionals. I was also threatened with death, abuse and other forms of

torture". He then went on to describe other abuses including being "beaten, abused and deprived of sleep" (see his testimony given in appendix 1).

Dr Ibrahim's letter called on the government to investigate the abuses against him, but no investigation, as far as is known, has been conducted.

Prison doctors' confirmation of torture

A number of detainees moved from secret detention to Kober prison in December 1989 were examined by prison doctors. One prisoner, reported to have been sent to Kober prison in early December after he had been tortured at a "safe house" in Khartoum, was seriously ill as a result and unable to stand. The prison authorities refused to accept responsibility for keeping him in detention. However, following pressure from a member of the ruling NSRCC he was taken to a military hospital which issued a statement stating that he was fit for detention despite his poor health.

A group of 19 prisoners sent to Kober prison a few days later were also in a critical condition as a result of torture. The prison administration ordered them to be examined by three prison doctors, who on 12 December 1989 submitted their findings to the Governor of Kober prison. Their conclusion was that each one of the 19 prisoners had been tortured or ill-treated. A senior government official at the Ministry of the Interior received the medical report from the Prison's Department. He is reported that this medical report is "Communist allegations to have reacted by claiming that the medical report amounted to "Communist allegations". A commission of inquiry was later formed to investigate what had happened to these prisoners, but it is not known whether any inquiry has been conducted or, if so, what conclusions were reached and recommendations made.

Harsh prison conditions

Most political prisoners have not been allowed family visits or proper medical treatment. Although some former government officials detained at Kober prison were allowed family visits by relatives, most other detainees arrested since the coup in June 1989 have effectively been held incommunicado, some for nearly a year. Shalla prison in particular is known in Sudan for its very harsh conditions. It is a remote prison situated in the western province of Darfur, about 20 kilometres from the nearest town in the Darfur desert. Prisoners' families find it extremely difficult to get there from other parts of the country.

Some 56 prisoners of conscience are currently detained in Shalla prison without charge or trial and are reported to be living in cramped conditions and to have insufficient water.

Some detainees in Shalla prison are known to be ill and to need urgent medical treatment. Abdelmoneim Salman, a 65-year-old teacher, is known to be diabetic, and to suffer from hypertension and a peripheral vascular disease. Samir Girgis, a 60-year-old pensioner, is reported to be very ill, but he has received no medical treatment while in Shalla prison. Two prisoners who were moved in April 1990 to Omdurman Military Hospital were reported to be seriously ill. (See prisoners' description of conditions in Shalla which are given in appendix 2).

Amnesty International's appeals to the Sudanese Government

Amnesty International is urging the government to implement the following measures with immediate effect.

1. The head of state and senior government officials, particularly those responsible for security, law and justice, should publicly condemn

torture. Members of the security service who detain and interrogate prisoners should be instructed that torture is unlawful and not to be tolerated under any circumstances.

2. Torture should be prohibited by law and made a criminal offence, with severe penalties for those convicted of inflicting it.
3. Prisoners should not be kept in secret or unacknowledged detention. The government should see that all detainees are brought before a judicial authority soon after arrest and that relatives, lawyers and independent doctors should have immediate and regular access to them.
4. Safeguards against torture should include the regular inspection of interrogation centres by independent officials, judges and national and international humanitarian organizations. All places of detention should be announced publicly as such.
5. All complaints and reports of torture should be investigated immediately and impartially and the findings made public.
6. Torture victims should be given appropriate medical treatment and compensated for their suffering.

Amnesty International is, furthermore, appealing for the immediate and unconditional release of all prisoners of conscience detained in Sudan on account of their peaceful opposition to the government or their trade union activity.

Most of them are in indefinite detention without charge or trial. The authorities are being asked to review the cases of all untried and convicted political prisoners in order to ensure that no one is imprisoned solely for his or her non-violent political beliefs and activities.

All prisoners should be entitled to challenge in court the legal grounds of their detention. Political prisoners should either be charged with a specific criminal offence and tried in accordance with international standards of fair trial or else should be released.

Appendix 1

Letter from an University of Khartoum academic, Faruk Mohamed Ibrahim, to the Sudanese Head of State

To: The Chairman of the Salvation Revolution Command Council
c/o the Director of the State Prison

29 January 1990

Dear Sir,

RE : COMPLAINT OF TORTURE OF A POLITICAL DETAINEE AND REQUEST FOR AN INVESTIGATION TO BE CONDUCTED

I was arrested at approximately 2pm on Thursday 30 November 1989, outside one of the gates of the University of Khartoum, and was taken to the Security Forces' building. That evening I was blindfolded and transferred to a building which I later realized was the former headquarters of the Elections Committee. Before, during and after the interrogation that same evening I was subjected to physical torture which involved being beaten with shoes, being kicked and being slapped on the face, head and all over the body by people who were professionals. I was also threatened with death, abuse and other forms of torture. I was then put into a small, wet toilet where I remained for three days, and where I was beaten, abused and deprived of sleep. I was then taken to a bathroom with five other detainees and we were all subjected to the same abuse and beatings. We were also prevented from sleeping, bathing, cleaning our teeth, performing ablutions and praying for nine more days. In the middle of the night, when I was moved from the toilet to the bathroom, I was taken outside in the cold and given an ice-cold bath plus intermittent beatings with shoes and constant abuse.

At dawn on 12 December I was taken to the State Prison in northern Khartoum with 18 other detainees who had been subjected to the same torture and who had previously held leading trade unionist positions. I remember there was Hashim Mohamed Ahmed, leader of the Engineers' Union; Mahjoub al-Zubair, deputy Chairman of the General Confederation of Sudanese Trade Unions; Sadiq Shami, one of the secretaries of the Sudan Bar Association; Hamouda Fath al-Rahman, leader of the White Nile Doctors' Union; and Dr Tariq Ismail, a professor in the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Khartoum. There we were examined by the prison doctor and received the necessary treatment.

No specific charges were made against me during the interrogation, which aimed to extract information from me under torture on the whereabouts of people I knew nothing about and on the date and venue of a forthcoming meeting of the Executive Committee of the Trade Union Organization of University of Khartoum professors of which I was not a member. However, I understood from remarks made to me on the evening of Saturday 2 December by Colonel Bakri Hassan Saleh, who is a member of the Revolution Command Council - remarks to which I was not given the opportunity to reply - that he objected to some of the material I use for teaching at the University. He accused me of being engaged in activities which are incompatible with the current political regime, and was convinced that I would receive just punishment for these crimes of which I knew nothing.

Trial or no trial, torture is mentioned neither in the laws which were in force before 30 June 1989 nor in those enacted subsequently, as the official state spokesman denied any knowledge of such abuses of human rights which would be inconsistent with the values we hold in Sudan. I am

writing to ask you to investigate the above facts. Justice requires that I should either be sent for trial if there are charges against me or be released if there are none. As for the content of the materials I use for teaching, I must stress that the lecturers' Council of the University of Khartoum is the only authority legally empowered to determine the courses and rulings in this respect.

Faruk Mohamed Ibrahim
Lecturer
The University of Khartoum

Appendix 2**Extracts of a letter smuggled out of Shalla prison in April 1990 by a prisoner of conscience:**

"...a whole day would pass without detainees receiving a single drop of water. With the steaming desert heat, dirty clothes and bodies, swarms of flies and stench from the open sewers in the prison, the place becomes truly hazardous to health and to life. On 11 April several political detainees nearly collapsed of thirst before water was made available after a day and a half without. A few years ago, 32 inmates of this prison are known to have died of thirst. The open sewers of stagnant refuse run through the prison filling the air with stench and forming a breeding ground for flies and disease".

Conditions at Shalla prison described by another prisoner in April 1990:

"...We have endured conditions which are beyond description. Poor meals, bad and filthy water, contaminated and dirty buildings. Two medium sized wards for all [inmates], with two small rooms containing holes dug in the ground serve as toilets!... The only possible and available drainage system is to get certain prisoners twice a day to carry a few bucketfuls of it and throw it in the desert not very far away. We are not allowed to contact anybody. Our families are not allowed to visit us, and, as you know, even if they were allowed to, whose family could afford the plane fare from Khartoum to al-Fasher -LS3000 [3000 Sudanese pounds - the equivalent of US \$670] and if they could, how could they travel from al-Fasher to Shalla, and where could they stay?"

Extracts from a letter from political detainees in Shalla prison, August 1990

"This is an update report about the situation and conditions of the political detainees in Shala prison. Currently there are 56 political detainees. They share the prison with about 300 'criminal' inmates and 100 Chadian rebel soldiers.

...The 56 detainees continue to live in 3 rooms and 10 cells. Overcrowding, poor ventilation and leaky roofs become a problem when it rains and makes sleeping in the courtyard not possible. The food situation is deteriorating rapidly. It was very bad during April, improved during May-July, but is worsening now. The detainees receive certain items of food and cash to buy others.

...Water is brought to the prison by a tanker. The tanker occasionally fails to bring water due to lack of fuel and other reasons and excuses. Sometimes the containers run dry for a whole day. Some detainees are quite ill, and doctors in El Fasher hospital have recommended that they be transferred to Khartoum for medical treatment. Months have passed without the necessary approval by the authorities being granted."

From the left, Dr Maamun Mohamed Hussein, Dr Gordon, Dr Ja'far Mohamed Hussein and Dr Sayed Mohamed Abdallah, at their trial in December 1989

Dr Ali Fadul, reported to have died under torture at a secret detention centre in Khartoum on 21 April 1990.

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RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Please ensure that all relevant people in the section have received copies for their attention, and that the document is centrally filed for future reference.

In addition please undertake as many of the following recommended actions as possible.

1. Please make this document available to journalists and others interested in Sudan and particularly health-related issues in Sudan.
2. Sections without medical groups should send a copy of this document to their national medical and nursing associations urging them to express their concern about the situation of colleagues in Sudan and more generally about the state of human rights in that country.

DISTRIBUTION BY THE IS

This document has been sent directly by the IS to medical groups which will also receive a related medical action.