

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 54/041/2004

19 April 2004

**Further information on UA 368/03 (AFR 54/107/03, 22 December 2003) and follow-up (AFR 54/001/2004)
- fear for safety**

SUDAN Islam Salih Adam Belo (m), journalist

Prisoner of conscience Islam Salih Adam Belo was sentenced to one month in prison and a fine of one million Dinars (approximately US\$3,900) on 10 April.

Islam Salih is the director of the Sudan office of the Qatar-based independent Arabic TV station *al-Jazeera*. He was convicted under Article 66 of the 1991 Sudan Penal Code of "publication of false news" that is "harmful to the country", reportedly relating to reports broadcast by *al-Jazeera* on tuberculosis, landmines and the conflict in Darfur, western Sudan.

He was also convicted under Article 199 of the Customs and Duties Act of obstructing customs officials in the course of their duties. His lawyers have appealed, but are yet to receive a response. Islam Salih has now begun his jail sentence at Omdurman prison and faces an additional month in detention if the fine is not paid.

Islam Salih was arrested on 18 December 2003 at *al-Jazeera's* office in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, and the office was closed down. He was held incommunicado for six days.

The Government has imposed censorship on the media in Sudan, particularly with regard to the internal conflict in the west of Sudan where attacks on the settled population, mostly by government-aligned militias, have caused mass displacement of the population, with hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing into neighbouring Chad.

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

- calling for Islam Salih to be released immediately and unconditionally, on the grounds that he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of his opinions;
- calling on the Sudanese government to stop detaining members of Sudanese civil society solely for the peaceful expression of their opinions;
- calling on the security services to end the intimidation and harassment of journalists and other media workers.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
First Vice-President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegram: First Vice-President, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax : + 249 11 771025

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 11 770883
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 11 779383
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Alzawahi Ibrahim Malik
Minister of Information
Ministry of Information and Communications
PO Box 291
Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Information Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 11 780146
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Dr Hamadtu Mukhtar
Chair of the Human Rights Committee
National Assembly
Fax: + 249 15 650 950

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 31 May 2004