

PUBLIC

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UA 220/03 Fear for safety/incommunicado detention/possible prisoners of conscience

SUDAN	Zahir Mohamed Musa (m), aged 34]
	Osman Ibrahim (m), aged 31] environmentalists
	Pakinam Saad Eddin (m), aged 38]
	Mohamed Hajana (m)	

Environmentalist Zahir Mohamed Musa was arrested by the security forces on 13 July in the town of Sinja in White Nile state, central Sudan. Two other environmentalists, Osman Ibrahim and Pakinam Saad Eddin, and another man, Mohamed Hajana, were arrested on 16 July by the security forces in Sinja. They are being detained at an unknown location and Amnesty International fears for their safety. The four men may be prisoners of conscience, arrested solely on account of their peaceful activities.

It is not known why the four men were arrested. At the time of arrests, the three environmentalists were in Sinja to participate in a workshop financed by the European Union at the office of the Sudanese Red Crescent organization. The workshop aimed to explain to members of local civil society organizations the Cotonou Agreement, a trade, political and aid treaty, to which Sudan is a party. The agreement, between the European Union and 77 African, Caribbean and Pacific States, was signed in 2000 and came into effect in April 2003. Mohamed Hajana was not participating in the workshop but was hosting the three other men in his house in the evenings.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Under the 1999 National Security Forces Act, amended in 2001, the security forces can detain people incommunicado without charge for up to nine months. The security forces can renew this sentence many times. This Act has been used extensively to detain political opponents, perceived government critics, students and civil society activists without charge. Amnesty International continues to receive reports of torture or ill-treatment of detainees held incommunicado.

In the past two months, there has been an increase in the number of arrests and incidents of harassment of civil society activists by the Sudanese security forces in government-held areas, including of people expressing their views or participating in meetings on peace-related issues. The internationally-sponsored peace talks to resolve the 20 year-old civil war in the south are continuing between the Sudanese government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army.

In November 1999, the European Union opened a political dialogue with the Sudanese government on issues related to peace, democratization, the rule of law and human rights.

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

- expressing your concern at the reported incommunicado detention of Zahir Mohamed Musa, Osman Ibrahim, Pakinam Saad Eddin and Mohamed Hajana;
- stating that if they have been detained solely on account of their peaceful activities, they will be considered to be prisoners of conscience;
- calling for their whereabouts to be made public immediately;
- requesting assurances that they will not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention;
- urging that they be allowed immediate access to relatives, lawyers and any medical aid they may need;
- calling for their immediate release, unless they are charged promptly with a recognizable criminal offence, according to Sudan's obligations under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

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 771651 / 779977
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 771479
Salutation: Dear Minister

Dr Nafie Ali Nafie
Minister of Federal Government
Office of the Presidents People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Federal Government Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
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 Majdhub Yusuf Babiker
Governor of White Nile
C/o People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegram: Governor of White Nile, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 11 771651/ 779977
Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Dr Yasir Sid Ahmed
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 779173 / 770883

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 August 2003.