

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/fear of torture or ill-treatment/incommunicado detention

SUDAN

Mohamed Omer Ibrahim (m), aged 60, former regional manager of national telecommunications company in Darfur

Suleiman Hasab Allah (m), aged about 70, *shertai* (traditional leader) in the eastern Jebel Marra Mountains region

Dr Mohamed Issa El Haj (m), aged 51, pharmacist, intellectual

Abdelaziz Abdalla Abdel Mahmoud (m), aged 39, former civil servant

Suleiman Tahir Abdalla (m), aged 50, sheikh (native village administrator)

Mohammed Mohammed Tahir (m), aged 37, son of Suleiman Tahir Abdalla

Abu Gasim Musa Eltahir (m), aged 23, relative of Suleiman Tahir Abdalla

The seven men named above, all community leaders of Fur ethnicity, were arrested between 16 and 26 July by the Sudanese authorities in various locations in the Darfur region, western Sudan. Their whereabouts are unknown and they are at risk of torture or ill-treatment. Amnesty International fears for their safety.

Mohamed Omer Ibrahim was arrested by the security forces in Nyala, capital of South Darfur on 16 July. Six months earlier, he had been dismissed from his position as Darfur's regional manager of Sudatel, the national telecommunications company. The Sudanese authorities said that he was dismissed for reasons of "public interest", but gave no further information. Suleiman Hasab Allah, a *shertai* or traditional leader, was reportedly arrested by the security forces between 21 and 26 July while on his way to Nyala from Niertetei, western Darfur. Dr Mohamed Issa El Haj was arrested at 10am on 26 July by five plain clothed security officers in the pharmacy where he works in Nyala. Abdelaziz Abdalla Abdel Mahmoud was arrested at midday on 26 July in Nyala's market by two plain clothed security officers. All four men are reportedly being held incommunicado at the security forces premises in Nyala, but no one has been allowed to see them.

Suleiman Tahir Abdalla, a *sheikh* (village administrator), his son Mohamed Mohammed Tahir and another relative, Abu Gasim Musa El Tahir were reportedly arrested on 25 July by Sudanese government soldiers during an attack on the village of Shoba, North Darfur state. They were then allegedly transferred to the nearby town of Kabkabyia. They are being held incommunicado at an unknown location. According to the National Security Forces Act, the security forces can detain people incommunicado without charge for up to nine months without judicial review. Amnesty International receives frequent reports of torture of people detained incommunicado by the security forces.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to local sources, between 4am and 5am on 25 July, hundreds of people wearing government forces uniforms launched an attack on the eastern part of Shoba, a village mainly inhabited by members of the Fur ethnic group. The violence spread to the western part of Shoba the following day. At least 51 Shoba inhabitants, including many elders, were reportedly killed in the attack and eight were injured. No casualties were reported among the attackers. Hundreds of villagers, the majority of whom were women, fled to Kabkabyia. Shoba villagers living in Kabkabyia were reportedly prevented from going to Shoba until 28 July by a roadblock organised by government soldiers. Some were able to return to Shoba on 28 July to bury the bodies of the dead villagers. Most Shoba inhabitants remain in Kabkabyia. Some people of Fur ethnicity allege that the attack was mounted by members of nomadic groups and government soldiers.

Shoba was also the scene of a previous attack on 28 April 2002, when an armed group of nomad people attacked the village, killing 17 people. At least eight Shoba community leaders, including some who

protested to the authorities about the attack, were subsequently arrested by the Sudanese authorities. They were held for up to seven months in detention without charge before being released.

In February 2003, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), a group of farmers from the Fur and Zaghawa ethnic groups, took up arms against the government, because of what they perceive as the lack of government protection of their people and the marginalisation of the region. Fighting between government forces and the SLA has intensified over the past few weeks, mainly in North Darfur. Incommunicado detention by the government security forces has been used extensively, including in Darfur, to detain suspected government critics and, since February 2003, civilians suspected to support the SLA. People in the region also allege that those of Fur and Zaghawa ethnicity are increasingly arrested because they are of the same ethnic group as members of the SLA.

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

- expressing grave concern for the safety of the seven men named above, arrested between 16 and 26 July in the Darfur region;
- urging the authorities to publicly reveal the whereabouts of the seven men and calling for assurances that the detainees will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to allow them immediate and unrestricted access to their relatives, legal counsel and any medical care they may need;
- calling on the government to abide by its commitments under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and either charge the detainees with a recognizably criminal offence and give them a prompt and fair trial in accordance with international standards or set them free immediately;
- expressing your concern at the growing abuses against civilians in the Darfur region and urging the authorities not to respond to the situation by detaining people incommunicado without charge.

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 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Dear Minister

Lieutenant-General Adam Hamid Musa
Governor of South Darfur
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Governor of South Darfur, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 11 771651/ 787 676 / 783223
Salutation: Dear Governor

Mr Osman Mohamed Yusif Kubor
Governor of North Darfur
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Governor of North Darfur, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 731 42696 (please keep trying)
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 10 September 2003.