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Sudan: 24 Sentenced to death after unfair trial

Amnesty International is gravely concerned at the death sentences passed on 24 people, including a 15-year-old minor, in a Special Court in Nyala, South Darfur. The court found the group guilty on 26 April of murdering 25 villagers, wounding 18 others, and burning homes and other buildings during a raid on the village of Singita south of Kas in Darfur.

"The procedures in Special Courts set up under the State of Emergency are grossly unfair. The accused were tried without proper legal representation. They were held without access to family members and lawyers since their arrest in January," Amnesty International said.

Amnesty International opposes the death penalty unconditionally. It is a violation of the right to life and has never been proved to have any deterrent effect.

The court also sentenced one member of the group to three years in jail for arms possession, while another minor was given three years in a reformatory. Twelve defendants were acquitted. The sentence can be appealed.

"The state has a duty to punish those who commit such crimes but they must be given a fair trial and not be sentenced to death. The government of Sudan must ensure that those sentenced are given a fair hearing during the appeal process," Amnesty International said.

Public Document

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