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Fear for safety/Torture/ Incommunicado detention

20 December 2002

SUDAN

Omer Farouk (m), 4th year student in Medicine
Nazar Mohamed Hamza (m), 4th year student in Medicine
Atef Al-Sunni (m), 4th year student in Arts
Yousef Libis (m)
Mu'awia Yaqub Mohamed Yaqub (m)
And a number of other students

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of the students named above. They were reportedly arrested by the security services between mid November and December and are detained in the political section, run by the security services, of Kober prison in the capital Khartoum. Omer Farouk was allegedly arrested on 2 December and severely beaten by security officers. A number of other students are said to be detained in Kober prison or in Dabak prison, in Khartoum North.

The detained students do not have access to their relatives, lawyers or adequate medical aid and are being detained without charge or trial.

On 12 and 13 November, scores of students were arrested by the security services after riot police and security raided the Faculty of Education at Khartoum University in Omdurman and the Shambat campus of Khartoum University in Khartoum North respectively. At least 25 students were injured in these clashes. Eleven students who were brought to hospital were subsequently arrested from their hospital beds by security officers. Many students were released after signing an undertaking that they would not participate in political activities. However Amnesty International is concerned that some may still be detained incommunicado. Other students were arrested days after the university incident.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

On 14 November, the Vice-Chancellor of Khartoum University announced the indefinite closure of the University, "for the safety of students". Between 22 and 24 October, there had been violent clashes between students from the University of Khartoum and riot police, armed with sticks and rubber bullets. The clashes were sparked by the intervention of riot police at a student celebration, to mark the 38th anniversary of demonstrations against the military government of General Abboud in October 1964.

The Ministry of Interior set up a committee of investigation into the October incidents at Khartoum University. Amnesty International called on the committee to investigate allegations of torture or other ill-treatment at the hands of the security forces reported by many students.

The Sudanese National Security Act gives the security forces arbitrary powers to arrest and hold people in incommunicado detention for up to nine months. Many of those held incommunicado are tortured or otherwise ill-treated. Incommunicado detention facilitates torture or ill-treatment and can itself be a form of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment.

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

- expressing concern at the incommunicado detention of the students named above and calling for them to be released immediately if they are not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence;
- calling on the authorities to publicly reveal the names and place of detention of all students reportedly detained;

- seeking assurances that those detained will be treated humanely and will have immediate access to lawyers, relatives and any medical assistance they would need;
- expressing concern at the reported torture of Omer Farouk and urging that allegations of torture or other ill-treatment on detainees by the security services be fully investigated;
- seeking assurances that any suspected perpetrator of torture or other ill-treatment will be brought promptly to justice.

APPEALS TO (Please note, fax numbers may be difficult to obtain, but please keep trying):

His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
President of the Republic of Sudan
President's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: President al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 787676 / 783223

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 774842 / 774906

Salutation: Dear Minister

Major General Abdul-Rahim Muhammed Hussein
Minister of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Minister of Internal Affairs, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 774339 / 776554/ 773046 / 770186 / 777900

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

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

Fax: + 249 11 779173 / 770883

Salutation: Dear Dr Yasir Sid Ahmed

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 January 2003.