

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 54/08/99

18 May 1999

Further information on UA 85/99 (AFR 54/06/99, 22 April 1999) and follow-up (AFR 54/07/99, 27 April) Torture/ Health and legal concerns

SUDAN Mohamed Abd Al-Seed, 53 (note new spelling)
Maha Hassan Ali (f)
Abd Al-Gadir Hafiz (note new spelling)

Maha Hassan Ali was released without charge on 23 April 1999, reportedly after the official Sudan Journalists' Association provided unspecified guarantees. Abd Al-Gadir Hafiz, a correspondent for the Saudi Arabian newspaper *Al-Gezira*, was released the next day. Mohamed Abd Al-Seed remains in detention, and Amnesty International has serious concerns for his safety.

The three were arrested in Khartoum between 14 and 18 April 1999. The authorities have refused to say why they were arrested or where they were detained, or to allow them access to their relatives or lawyers. They were reportedly accused of spying for a foreign power, possibly Egypt.

The whereabouts of Mohamed Abd Al-Seed, a correspondent for the London-based Arabic newspaper *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, are still unknown. He has been denied access to his lawyer and his family, and deprived of medicine for irritable bowel syndrome.

Mohamed Abd Al-Seed has been detained for political reasons twice before. Amnesty International believes that he has been tortured during this detention, which is also politically motivated. A video of his interrogation was reportedly shown to a selected audience of newspaper editors. The tape had been heavily edited, and so provided no evidence to support the accusation that Mohamed Abd Al-Seed had spied for foreign powers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

There has been a pattern in recent years in Sudan of torture and illegal secret detention of suspected government opponents. Journalists are often detained on suspicion of harboring opposition sympathies. Egypt is one of a number of governments involved in peace initiatives and mediation between the Sudanese government and the armed opposition.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/faxes/express/ airmail letters in English or your own language:

- expressing concern that Mohamed Abd Al-Seed remains in incommunicado detention, and urging the authorities to reveal his whereabouts;
- expressing grave concern at reports that he has been tortured while in detention, and seeking assurances that this will not be repeated;
- appealing for him to be given immediate access to his relatives and lawyers, and medical treatment as required;
- calling for him to be either taken to court, charged with a recognizable criminal offence and given a fair trial in accordance with international standards, or released immediately and unconditionally;
- calling on the authorities to immediately and impartially investigate allegations of torture.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir

President of the Republic of the Sudan
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Faxes: + 24911 787676 or 783223
Telegrams: President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan
Faxes: + 24911 774063
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Faxes: + 24911 779383
Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Hafez al-Sheikh al-Zaki
Chief Justice
Supreme Court
Khartoum, Sudan

Dr Ahmad al-Mufti
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302
Khartoum, Sudan

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 June 1999.