

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 54/02/97

UA 13/97

Fear of torture/ill-treatment / possible prisoners of
conscience

15 January 1997

SUDAN Omer Mohamed Omer, senior member of the *Ansar*
Mohamed Mahil, senior member of the *Ansar*
Ali Omda Abdel Magid, senior member of the *Ansar*
Mohamed Satti, senior member of the *Ansar*
Mahdi Abderahman Ali, senior member of the *Ansar*
Mohamed al-Mahdi, imam of the *al-Ansar* mosque
Al-Fadl Adam, member of the *Umma* Party
Ibrahim Ali, office director of the former Prime Minister
Abdel Mahmud Haj Saleh, former minister
al-Haj Abdelrahman Abdallah Nugdullah, former minister
Abdel Rasoul al-Nur, former regional governor
Mohamed Ismail al-Azhari
Mustafa Abdel Gadir, lawyer
Bakri Adil
Ali Mahmud Hassanein, lawyer

Nagib Nejm al-Din, medical doctor

Sixteen men, thirteen of them senior members of the *Ansar* order of Islam and its political counterpart the banned *Umma* Party, are reported to have been detained without charge or trial in Khartoum, Sudan's capital. They are believed to be in a section of Kober Prison run by the security service. Their families have been denied access to them. Amnesty International fears that the men are at risk of torture and ill-treatment and is concerned that they may be prisoners of conscience.

Omer Mohamed Omer and Mohamed Mahil were reportedly detained on 10 January 1997 and the others in the early morning of 13 January 1997. Abdel Rasoul al-Nur, al-Haj Abdalrahman Abdallah Nugdulla and Mohamed Ismail al-Azhari were re-arrested: they had previously been detained on 4 January and held for 24 hours. Mustafa Abdel Gadir and Ali Mahmud Hassanein are prominent lawyers who have appeared for the defence in political trials. Negib Nejm al-Din is a former secretary general of the banned Sudan Doctors' Union, a politically active trade union opposed to the current government.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Five other prominent members of the *Umma* Party arrested on 4 January 1997 remain in detention (see UA 08/97, AFR 54/01/97). The political atmosphere in Sudan is reported to be tense after armed forces belonging to the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA), of which the *Umma* Party is a member, cooperated with the primarily southern armed opposition group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army, to capture the northern Sudanese border town of Kurmuk on 12 January 1997. Sadiq al-Mahdi, a former prime minister of Sudan and leader of the *Umma* Party, escaped from Sudan in mid-December 1996 to Eritrea where the NDA is based.

Anyone detained by the Sudanese security authorities is at risk of ill-treatment and torture, in particular during interrogation in security offices. In the past the authorities have blamed torture and ill-treatment on undisciplined security officials. Amnesty International's information, however, is that torture and ill-treatment in security force custody are systematic.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express/airmail letters in English, Arabic or your own language:

- expressing concern at the detention without charge of the above men, who may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their suspected opposition to the Sudan Government;
- seeking assurances that the detainees are not being tortured or ill-treated;
- urging that they be given immediate and regular access to their families, legal representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- appealing for them to be released if they are not to be charged with recognizable criminal offences and brought promptly to a fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
President of the Republic of the Sudan
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Mr 'Abd al-Basit Sabdarat
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Minister of Justice 'Abd al-Basit Sabdarat, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: c/o 22411 KAID SD or 22604 IPOL SD
Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

1) Mr Obeid Haj Ali
Chief Justice
Supreme Court
Khartoum, Sudan

2) Mr Ahmad al-Mufti
Secretary
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 28 February 1997.