

EXTERNAL

AI Index: AFR 54/10/97

UA 43/97

Possible prisoners of conscience / Fear of  
torture

7 February 1997

**SUDANEzekiel Kodi, former regional minister**  
**Joshua Dau Diu, former civil servant**  
**Kwai Malak, teacher**

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Amnesty International has received reports of the detention without charge or trial of the three men named above. Ezekiel Kodi, a former minister in the southern regional government (abolished as an institution in 1983), is reported to have been arrested on 5 February 1997 as he left the office of Abel Alier, a former Vice-President of Sudan, in central Khartoum. Joshua Dau Diu, a former senior civil servant and now the owner of a school for displaced southern Sudanese in Khartoum, and Kwai Malak, a teacher in the school, are reported to have been arrested on 4 February 1997, also in Khartoum. Amnesty International fears that the men are at risk of torture and ill-treatment and is concerned that they may be prisoners of conscience.

The arrests follow a memorandum of protest about political conditions in the Sudan sent by Abel Alier to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and the speaker of the National Assembly Hassan al-Turabi on 2 February 1997. The detained men are friends and political allies of Abel Alier. Two other former regional government ministers arrested on 4 February 1997, Joseph Ukel and Isaiah Kulang Mabior, are reported to have been released.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

At least 90 alleged political opponents are known to have been detained without charge or trial since the beginning of 1997 (see UA 08/97, AFR 54/01/97; UA 13/97, AFR 54/02/97; UA 20/97, AFR 54/03/97; UA 21/97, AFR 54/06/97; UA 23/97, AFR 54/05/97; UA 40/97, AFR 54/08/97). However, Amnesty International believes that the total number of those arrested is much higher. The majority of those detained appear to be members of banned political parties and trade unions.

The political atmosphere in Sudan has become increasingly tense since armed forces belonging to the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) 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. The Sudanese government has accused the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments of supporting the rebel offensive. Both have denied that they are doing so. Fighting is reported to be continuing.

A Reuters report on 29 January 1997 reported that the speaker of the Sudanese parliament, Dr Hassan al-Turabi, had claimed in an interview on the same day that at most 15 members of the *Umma* Party and the Democratic Unionist Party had been recently detained. He stated that the arrests had been made in order to maintain law and order. He also stated that those detained might be released once government forces had retaken territory occupied by opposition forces in the north of the country. However, in the same interview, Dr Hassan al-Turabi hinted that senior leaders of opposition parties may be put on trial on treason-related charges.

Anyone detained by the Sudanese security authorities is at risk of ill-treatment and torture, particularly 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 forces custody are systematic.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express or 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 21 March 1997.