

# SUDAN

## Progress or public relations?

### Introduction

As the Government of Sudan celebrates the seventh anniversary of the 30 June 1989 coup that brought it to power, the continuing pattern of serious human rights violations underlines that campaigning for improvements is a long-term commitment.

The government is politically more isolated than ever before. It faces a seemingly endless civil war, hostile neighbours and international censure. Its human rights record has been condemned by the UN General Assembly, the UN Commission for Human Rights, and the African Commission for Human and People's Rights of the Organization of African Unity (OAU). The government has been accused of supporting terrorism by the UN Security Council and the OAU's Conflict Resolution Mechanism.

The pressure on the government to consolidate its position was reflected in its calling presidential and general elections for March 1996, although the "showing of any political opposition by any means" remained prohibited and political parties remained banned.

The war between the government and the armed opposition Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) and South Sudan Independence Movement/Army (SSIM/A) continues unabated. A peace process mediated by the Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD) is stalled possibly beyond resurrection and fighting has intensified. During 1995 there were reports of heavy fighting in the Nuba Mountains, particularly early in the year. Northern Bahr al-Ghazal has been destabilized by government-backed militia. Since October 1995 there has been heavy fighting between the SPLM/A and government forces in Equatoria. The SSIM/A is racked by internal divisions which have led to further fighting and loss of life in Upper Nile.

Neighbouring states regard Sudan as a threat to regional security. Uganda and Eritrea, members of the IGADD mediating group, have severed diplomatic relations. In January 1996 Eritrea handed over the Sudanese Embassy in Asmara to the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), a coalition of banned opposition political parties and trade unions, and indicated that it was willing to supply the NDA with arms. The Sudanese Government has accused Uganda of supporting the SPLM/A, and has retaliated by arming and supporting Ugandan armed opposition groups.

Ethiopia, another IGADD member, implicated the Sudanese authorities in an assassination attempt on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June 1995. Sudan has accused Ethiopian troops of attacking border posts. There are long-running

disputes with Egypt over alleged Sudanese support for Islamist armed opposition groups in Egypt and over a strip of territory claimed by both countries.

The economic infrastructure of southern Sudan has been devastated. Millions of people are dependent on their livestock, their crops and relief aid. When livestock are stolen in raids or die because veterinary services have collapsed, or when crops fail or people are driven off their lands, the people of southern Sudan are forced to rely on famine foods collected in the wild or on emergency assistance from UN Operation Lifeline Sudan and international non-governmental organizations. In 1995, however, relief activities in parts of Sudan were severely disrupted by government intervention and fighting.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the government-controlled parts of Sudan are racked by soaring inflation. The authorities have raised the price of bread and other basic commodities, making life a struggle, not only for the urban poor but even for the middle classes.

In this context, the Sudanese Government's response to political opposition has been to use its repressive apparatus to silence its internal critics, while making some minor concessions on human rights issues. Hundreds of political detainees were held incommunicado without charge or trial during 1995; Amnesty International knew the names of over 300, but there were many more. Detainees continue to be tortured and ill-treated. Cruel and inhuman penalties remain enshrined in law. The demolition of squatter camps around Khartoum and Omdurman has continued as the authorities seek to relocate people internally displaced by the war further from the capital. Confrontations have been suppressed by force as camp residents have sought to save their homes and possessions.

Inside the war zones unarmed civilians have been the targets of deliberate attacks both by government troops and opposition forces. Since January 1995 hundreds of villagers, many of them women and children, have been deliberately and arbitrarily killed. Thousands have had their livelihoods destroyed or have been driven from their homes by government troops, marauding militia working with the authorities, and SPLA troops. The government's paramilitary PDF are reported to have kidnapped hundreds of children from Bahr al-Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains. These children have effectively "disappeared".

This report describes the major human rights developments in Sudan since January 1995. Despite the continuing pattern of gross abuse and the dismissive public attitude of the authorities, it concludes that the situation would be even worse without the campaigning pressure of individuals, of non-governmental organizations, of governments and of inter-governmental bodies. More importantly, it concludes that the human rights situation in

---

<sup>1</sup> *United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Sudan* by the Department of Humanitarian Affairs, February 1996.

---

Sudan remains grave and that determined action by the international community is an urgent need.

During 1995, the government made some modest concessions on human rights, including the partial closure of an important secret detention centre and the release of dozens of political detainees. These concessions indicate that international pressure, combined with the government's desire to legitimize its position, can bring human rights improvements. However, they do not represent a fundamental change of attitude on the part of the authorities and are easily reversed.

The report discusses the government's response to criticism of its human rights record. It then focuses on three aspects of the human rights situation in Sudan. The first is the detention without charge or trial and the ill-treatment of political suspects in the north. A calendar of arrests demonstrates the continuing pattern of arrest, detention, release and rearrest. It also shows that government statements about detention and torture cannot be believed. The second is a pattern of gross violations hidden from the outside world in the remote area of northern Bahr al-Ghazal. During 1995 the situation deteriorated as the government increased its use of proxy militia forces, which massacred unarmed civilians and kidnapped children. The third is the inadequate response of the SPLM/A and SSIM/A to evidence that their troops were involved in massacres of civilians. The SPLM/A has stated that it is seeking to strengthen respect for human rights. However, when confronted by evidence of actual abuses, senior members of the SPLM/A have remained defensive and, so far, inactive.

The worst human rights abuses in Sudan take place in areas where documenting them is most difficult. Monitoring and exposing human rights abuses therefore remains a key task. The international community should only believe that the Sudanese Government, the SPLM/A and the SSIM/A are seriously engaged in establishing respect for human rights if concrete measures to do so can be observed. An independent, impartial and skilled body with full access to all parts of Sudan could achieve this. Close monitoring by such a body would be a step towards restoring some credibility on human rights issues.

## **Progress or public relations?**

### **“Divide and rule”: a strategy for responding to criticism**

On 25 January 1995 Amnesty International launched a worldwide campaign on human rights in Sudan which exposed abuses by both the government and the armed opposition. The campaign mobilized Amnesty International's own members, other individuals, non-governmental organizations and governments in Africa, the Middle East, Europe and the Americas. The organization's message was blunt: Sudan's future depends on establishing respect for human rights.

Two days after the campaign was launched, the Sudanese Government accused Amnesty International of “insulting Islam” and withdrew an invitation to visit. On 16 February the government issued a 24-page response called “*The crocodile tears*”, which denounced Amnesty International as biased and dishonest and charged it with using sweeping and inaccurate generalizations to characterize the human rights situation.

The government responded in detail to just one individual case out of the scores in Amnesty International’s 132-page report, claiming that the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Sudan had found allegations of sexual abuse and torture made by Brigadier Mohamed Ahmad al-Rayah al-Faki to be false. The evidence cited to support this was a statement that the Special Rapporteur, who has been barred from visiting Sudan since early 1994, did not mention the alleged rape in a report submitted in February 1994 to the 50th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights. Even this was untrue: the Special Rapporteur reported the allegation and made no comment on whether he had been able to establish its veracity.

The government's hostile public response to Amnesty International typifies one element in its strategy for dealing with human rights criticism. It regularly accuses critics of hostility to Islam, in an attempt to deflect attention from evidence of human rights violations and to mobilize support among Muslim communities.

A second dimension of the strategy is to portray criticism as the product of a western conspiracy. In April, Dr Hassan al-Turabi, the government’s ideological mentor, went as far as to claim that Amnesty International was in the pay of “the British intelligence services”.<sup>2</sup> Publicly at least, the government ignores the deep concern about the situation of human rights shown by many African states and by the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights of the OAU, demonstrated in its March 1995 resolution on Sudan.

A third tactic appears to be to attempt to sow division within the international human rights community. Some human rights organizations are banned from visiting Sudan while others are invited to “come and see for themselves”. This allows the

---

<sup>2</sup> Dr Hassan al-Turabi also claimed that Amnesty International did not mention his name as a human rights victim under the government of former President Ga’afar Nimeiri because “I am what they call the fundamentalist Dr Turabi”. Dr al-Turabi is mistaken. His name is recorded on page 84 of the organization’s 1978 Annual Report, which covered the year 1977. Amnesty International works against human rights violations worldwide on behalf of persons of all political persuasions. In the past 12 months the organization has issued reports which describe the violation of the human rights of persons holding Islamist political views in a range of countries, including Egypt, Tunisia, Israel and the Occupied Territories and Bahrain.

authorities to claim that they are in dialogue with the international community over human rights while avoiding the real issues.

The tactic of “divide and rule” is also being used in relation to the human rights mechanisms of the UN and the OAU. While maintaining its ban on the UN Special Rapporteur, the main UN agent for monitoring the situation of human rights in Sudan, the government has indicated its willingness to cooperate with other UN human rights bodies and the OAU’s African Commission on Human and People’s Rights. Amnesty International believes that international human rights bodies can avoid being misused by the Sudanese

## **Messages from Sudan**

**During the course of the past 12 months Amnesty International has received other, less dismissive, messages from Sudan.**

**A former prisoner asked an intermediary "to pass on my highest regards to Amnesty International for what they have done for us for years, under Abboud, Nimeiri (former leaders of military governments) and now. For us and for me personally".**

**He had received some cards from Amnesty International members. "I only got them three weeks ago, just by luck. I was not supposed (by the authorities) to receive them...I have replied to some. I was very touched to receive them."**

**"When prisoners receive support from outside, and their names are published outside the country, it helps them, especially in short-term detentions. Sometimes the authorities release the prisoners to let the pressure escape".**

**Another prisoner, released towards the end of 1995, wrote:**

**"I would like to express my deepest gratitude for your valuable moral and humanitarian support you gave during my arrestment (sic), torture and ill-treatment".**

**A government official wrote:**

**"It is continually being observed that tens of the organization members letters arrive daily to this Office which constitutes an obstacle in tackling our duties".**

**Amnesty's message: the worldwide human rights movement will stop campaigning when the authorities stop violating human rights.**

Government by ensuring that they consult and support each other. It is important that bodies considering visiting Sudan take into account the ways the government (and, indeed, the armed opposition) may be seeking to exploit their visit. For example, the various UN human rights institutions should insist that any proposed visit take place jointly with the UN Special Rapporteur.

In April 1995 Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Sudan's Minister of Foreign Affairs, extended the method to different branches of Amnesty International. He invited Norwegian members of the organization to go to Sudan, but when Amnesty International named a delegation which included the organization's Secretary General as well as the Director of the Norwegian Section, the authorities responded that the invitation "was not extended to the Headquarters of Amnesty International in London".

Misinformation is the fourth element in the government's strategy. A later section of this report shows the pattern of detention month by month juxtaposed with statements from senior government officials denying the existence of detention and torture. The government appears to be particularly sensitive about political detention. In a submission to the UN General Assembly in November 1995 the government quoted from the National Security Act 1990 to claim the law governing detention in Sudan is consistent with international standards. The government did not inform the UN that the 1990 Act, which Amnesty International regarded as wholly inadequate in its provisions purporting to protect detainees, was replaced by a new act in 1994 containing even fewer safeguards, described below.

### **Modest concessions during 1995**

The government has taken a number of steps towards addressing some human rights concerns. Significantly, these have all been in relation to political detainees in

---

the north. Many such cases are relatively well-documented, as they involve the literate, urban middle class or the organized working class. For people in remote rural areas with less power, with less access to the outside world, particularly people in hidden parts of the war zones, the pattern of gross abuse remained unchanged.

### ***The partial closure of a detention centre***

At the start of 1995 the best known secret detention centre, or "ghost house" as detention centres are popularly called in Sudan, was the so-called "City Bank" house, also known as "the Oasis" (*al-Waha*). Located in the centre of Khartoum, it comprised 18 purpose-built, poorly ventilated cells, and some rooms in an adjacent house. Two cells could accommodate up to 15 prisoners; 11 were "individual" cells -- "about the size of a prayer mat" according to one former detainee; and five could take up to three prisoners.

At three in the morning on 7 March 1995, the 54 detainees then held in the "City Bank" ghost house were transferred to Kober prison, the main civil prison in Khartoum. The security authorities had taken over a section from the Sudan Prisons Service. Some were released in the days that followed. Within a few weeks, work had begun to dismantle 16 of the cells. Two cells remain in use, apparently to hold people during periods of interrogation.

The detention centre had become an embarrassment to the government. Its location became widely known internationally after film showing it was broadcast and Amnesty International published its floor plan, drawn up after extensive interviews with former inmates.<sup>3</sup>

The partial closure of this particular ghost house, which played an important role in the processing of political detainees in Khartoum, was welcome. Its regime was notoriously harsh and detainees within it were frequently ill-treated.

However, the impact of this closure should not be exaggerated. The official Sudan Security still holds political detainees in a special section of Kober prison. Conditions are less harsh, but political detainees are still reportedly denied access to food from outside the prison and visits by relatives are regularly denied.

---

<sup>3</sup> Sudan: "The tears of orphans" -- no future without human rights (AI Index: AFR 54/02/95), published 25 January 1995.

### **Figure 1: Kober prison**

Furthermore, when hundreds of students and left-wing activists were arrested after protests in Khartoum in September 1995, secret detention centres were again opened to hold them. These were not necessarily specially constructed facilities, they were sometimes simply buildings owned by the government or its supporters which had rooms or cupboards with doors that can be locked.

Prisoners themselves often do not know where they are being held. However, during the past year, Amnesty International has received reports of detainees in Khartoum being held in a building formerly used by Sudan Airways for technical services; in buildings in *al-Amarat*, Gerief West and *al-Erkowit* (three suburbs of Khartoum); in the building which houses the offices of the Sudan News Agency (SUNA); and in a building near the Grand Hotel. There are also reports of ghost houses in Khartoum's twin cities of Khartoum North (on the Shambat Bridge Road) and Omdurman (in *al-Fitihab al-Auda*).

In addition, detainees are held in security offices in other towns, although poor communications make verifying information from outside the capital especially difficult. During 1995 Amnesty International knew of political prisoners arrested and held in Renk, Port Sudan, al-Obeid, Sennar, Wad Medani, Gedaref, Atabara, ad-Damer, Wau, Hasaheisa, Shendi, Kosti, Um Dorein and Kadugli.

### ***The August 1995 amnesty***

On 23 August 1995 the National Security Council declared that all political detainees “without exception” would be freed within 72 hours. This was three days before the arrival of a delegation of parliamentarians from the Africa, Caribbean, Pacific/European Union Joint Assembly (ACP/EU). On 26 August, 32 detainees were released; 19 were members of the banned Umma Party, eight were from the banned Sudan Communist Party (SCP) and five from the banned Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party. Many were detainees whose cases had been publicised by Amnesty International and other human rights organizations.

These releases were followed on 30 August by the release of 18 prisoners convicted on political charges at unfair trials in 1991 and 1994.<sup>4</sup> They included al-Hajj 'Abd al-Rahman Abdallah Nugdalla, a member of the Umma Party and former Minister, and Dr Gaafar Yassin Ahmad Abdullah, a pharmacist, whose cases were highlighted by Amnesty International in 1995.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> See *Sudan: A continuing human rights crisis* (AFR 54/03/92) and *Sudan: "The tears of orphans" -- no future without human rights* (AFR 54/02/95).

<sup>5</sup> *Sudan: Cases for appeals* (AFR 54/44/94).

## **Amendments to the National Security Act**

Amnesty International criticized the National Security Act (NSA) 1990 (as amended) during its 1995 campaign. The provisions highlighted by Amnesty International gave the appearance of safeguarding human rights but in reality provided no protection for detainees, particularly in relation to appeals against detention and the shortcomings of supposed judicial supervision.

### **Harassment on the outside**

**Released prisoners are not always "free". In March 1996 a prisoner released in late 1995 wrote to Amnesty International:**

**"Honestly speaking, I still feel unsecure and am suffering of, one, movement restriction within the country and outwards, without getting a pass from the security authorities [which is unlikely to be granted]; two, work and psychological harassment, being watched and followed plus verbal harassment; three, during my arrest security individuals took away many of my valuable belongings ...and then they denied [they had done this]."**

**This is a common experience. Before being re-arrested in February another former prisoner wrote to a relative in similar terms:**

**"Since my release from detention two years' ago one finds himself in a wider prison. For instance I am not allowed to leave the capital city nor the country and above that all possible means of getting a job are blocked."**

Amnesty International has learned that a new act was promulgated in November 1994 which abrogated the 1990 Act. The 1994 Act, as amended by the Transitional National Assembly in April 1995, dispenses completely with even the inadequate safeguards of the earlier Act. Under the 1990 Act detainees were held on renewable three-month detention orders which, although ordered by the National Security Council "or its authorized representative", had to be approved by a magistrate. Under the 1994 Act, the National Security Council can renew a three-month detention order once without reference to anyone else. Only if further renewals are required does the "competent judge", an appointee of the Chief Justice (himself a political appointee), have to give approval.

Detainees now do not even have the limited right to challenge their detention before a court which, in a limited and curtailed form, existed at least formally in the 1990 Act (as amended). The 1994 Act contains no requirement to inform detainees of the reasons for their detention. Formerly "bodily hurt" and savage treatment" were forbidden. They are no longer prohibited under any article of the 1994 Act.

Amnesty International is dismayed by the regressive changes in the NSA. These suggest that the government has no intention of curbing the powers of the security establishment.

## **The continuing pattern of detention**

Despite the government's assurances, not all political detainees were in fact freed in August 1995 and the releases were rapidly overtaken by widespread arrests. The pattern of

---

arrest, detention, release and rearrest makes it difficult to establish how many prisoners are being held in Sudan. The following calendar for the period January 1995 to February 1996 does not by any means represent all the arrests that took place each month, nor even all the arrests known to Amnesty International. It shows that official statements denying detention and ill-treatment cannot be taken at face value.

## **Monthly report: January 1995**

*“Our religion says that it is wrong to mistreat cats. How could we torture humans?”*

‘Abd al-Aziz Shiddo, Attorney General and Minister of Justice,  
23 February 1995.

At the start of the year there were about 50 detainees in the "City Bank" ghost house and others in security offices around Khartoum and in other towns. Among them were members of banned leftist political parties, including the SCP and the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party; trade unionists; southern Sudanese suspected of links with the SPLA; a number of people whose political affiliation is unknown to Amnesty International; and several foreign nationals.

Leftists who began the year in detention included **Yousif Hussein**, an engineer and former SCP member, arrested in June 1993 and held until April 1995, and **Mohamed Babiker Mokhtar**, Secretary General of the banned Sudan Federation of Employees, one of three union confederations before the 1989 coup. Mohamed was held from August 1994 to April 1995.

**Muhalab Siddiq Yousif**, a student, was arrested in November 1994, a few days before the release of his father, **Siddiq Yousif al-Nour**, a former SCP member who has been repeatedly detained. Muhalab was apparently held hostage to ensure his father's "good behaviour" -- he was detained until March 1995.

**Khaled Haroun Mansour** and **Jamal al-Sayid Fahmi** were arrested in July and October 1994 on suspicion of "hostile activity". Both men remained in detention until at least May 1995, when their names figured on an official list of 80 detainees.

Southerners and members of the Nuba ethnic group suspected of supporting the SPLA are always a particular target of the security agencies. **Usam al-Akid Bashir** was served with a detention order on 25 December 1994. He was still in detention in early May 1995, officially described as "a returnee from the rebellion". This category is used by the authorities to describe people who have left SPLA-controlled parts of the war zones for government-controlled areas,

usually because they have been displaced by fighting or by the destruction of their homes.

A young man called **Simon**, a member of the Nuer ethnic group from Upper Nile, was reported to be in his third year of detention. He had been sent to Cuba by the SPLA for training, and returned to Sudan via Uganda in 1992. He is reported to have been tortured by having molten plastic dripped onto his body, leaving deep burns, when he was first detained in the central Sudanese town of Kosti.

Several foreign nationals were held in secret detention, ostensibly for reasons of state security. **John Najuo**, from Cameroon, and **Molombe Philemon**, from Zaire, were arrested on 26 November 1994. The official reason for their detention was given as "hostile activity". Unofficial sources allege that they were involved in an unsuccessful deal to supply senior security officials with

materials to forge foreign currency. They were still held in late June.

There were several new arrests during January. **Marier Macar Kwil**, a southerner described officially as "a returnee from the rebellion", was arrested on 29 January and was still held uncharged in secret detention in late June. **Saleh Ali Fadeh** and **Samir Mohamed Said**, served with detention orders on 7 and 17 January respectively, were held uncharged on grounds officially described simply as "suspicion".

The brothers **Kamal al-Tayeb** and **Baha'a al-Tayeb**, an architect and a newly graduated university student, were arrested in early January, reportedly because Kamal was married to a niece of an exiled SCP leader. Kamal was released in February but Baha'a, who has asthma, remained in detention until at least March. He was repeatedly beaten during interrogation.

## Monthly report: February 1995

*"Torture has never been and never would be the policy of the government."*

"The crocodile tears: a response by the Government of the Sudan to the highly dramatic book published recently by Amnesty International"

16 February 1995.

A southern Sudanese former policeman and social worker, **Gordon Micah Kur**, was arrested on 2 February. He was held without charge in Khartoum until June. The authorities said that he was being held for "hostile activity" but provided no further information. Gordon Micah Kur has been repeatedly harassed by the authorities, apparently because of his social work in the 1980s with the Sudanese Amputees' Association, a welfare organization to help those whose hands and feet had been amputated as judicial punishment. The

association was banned after the 1989 coup. Gordon Micah Kur had previously been detained between September 1989 and June 1991, and adopted by Amnesty International as a prisoner of conscience.

Other southerners detained during February included **Malok Deng**, held for "spending public money", and **Peter Paul Kau**, suspected of "collaboration with rebels".

Several foreign nationals were held without charge in the "City Bank" ghost house in February. With no relatives in Sudan

## **Torture: fact or fiction?**

**As Justice Minister Shiddo pointed out to the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1995, there is nothing within Islam that justifies torture.**

**Unfortunately that does not mean it is not taking place with sickening regularity in detention centres run by Sudan Security. Those most at risk are detainees suspected of involvement with the SPLA and the NDA; however, persons suspected of even petty acts of opposition may also be tortured.**

**Gift Matayo Warille, a southern Sudanese student recently returned from India, was arrested on 1 January 1995 in Khartoum. As far as his family were concerned he simply "disappeared".**

**In May 1995 he was found in a military barracks in Khartoum. Torture had paralysed the right side of his body. Within a month he was dead. His family was not even officially told of his arrest, let alone his death. His crime: attending a public meeting addressed by SPLA leader John Garang de Mabior while overseas.**

**Scores of students suspected of involvement in anti-government demonstrations were badly beaten after being arrested in September 1995. One described being kicked, punched and beaten "on all possible body parts" with a black hosepipe.**

**A southerner released in October 1995 from detention in Renk, a small town in the most northerly part of Upper Nile, experienced and witnessed methods of torture and ill-treatment identical to those described by Amnesty International in previous reports. These include beatings and harsh exercises based on the internal disciplinary systems of the armed forces.**

**He saw a man with a rope tied tightly around his neck, his head covered so he could not see and his hands tied. He was beaten and kicked to make him fall over. He remained standing "and so survived".**

**Torture is prohibited in Sudan Penal Code. The penalty: up to three months in prison, the same as for insulting a judge. Under the National Security Act 1994 security officials acting in the course of their duties are indemnified against legal proceedings and are therefore unlikely to be subject to even this paltry penalty.**

**The message: torture in the course of duty is sanctioned in Sudan.**

---

*Progress or public relations?*

---

to try and secure their release, they were especially vulnerable. **Ramadan** and **Mohamed**, from Burundi, and two Moroccans, **Mustaffa** and **Suleiman**, remained in detention throughout the month. **Salih Farah Omar**, an Algerian, had been detained since his arrival in Sudan in 1994. It is not known if any of them remain in detention.

*Amnesty International 29 May 1996*

***An international concern: the UN, the OAU and human rights in Sudan***

***In March 1995, December 1995 and again in April 1996, the UN expressed deep concern at what the General Assembly in December 1995 called "serious, widespread and continuing human rights violations in the Sudan".***

***Among those voting in support of the March 1995 resolution at the UN Commission on Human Rights were countries from both north and south, including Algeria, Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Benin, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, Gabon, Mauritius, Nepal, the Russian Federation, France, Germany, UK and USA.***

***In March 1995 the OAU's African Commission on Human and People's Rights called on the Sudan Government "to take immediate steps to respect all human rights".***

***The African Commission has been invited by the Sudan Government to visit. However, the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Sudan, the author of several highly critical reports, remains banned.***

***During 1995 the UN set in motion the creation of a small human rights monitoring team to be placed in such locations "as would facilitate improved information flow and assessment". So far this team has not been formed, apparently a casualty of the UN budgetary crisis.***

***Each year the UN spends millions of US dollars, raised on appeal, supporting agencies working on the disastrous humanitarian consequences of the war.***

***The violation of human rights lies at the root of the war. Raids and attacks on civilian targets -- involving killings and kidnapping -- are often the immediate reason for people becoming internally displaced and dependent upon aid.***

***Amnesty's message: it is beyond time for there to be international investment in tackling the human rights causes of humanitarian disaster in Sudan.***

Northern Sudanese suspected of political opposition to the government were also held. One was **Mohamed Osman**, who was handcuffed in a standing position to the door of his cell for two days, a torture inflicted on many other detainees in previous years. He was also beaten in the courtyard of the detention centre.

The authorities continued to harass leading members of traditional orders of Islam. **Mohamed al-Mahdi**, imam of the Wad Nubawi mosque in Omdurman, and a senior member of the *Ansar* order, was detained on 18 February. He was released in March. Twelve other members of the *Ansar* order were reported to have been detained at around the same time.

On 25 February a demonstration near the Presidential Palace in Khartoum by women relatives of 28 military officers summarily executed in April 1990 was violently broken up by security officials. One woman was siezed and her head smashed against a wall. Six women were taken to security offices and forced to stand in the sun through the heat of the day, a common form of ill-treatment. They were released in the evening with orders to report back the next

day. They defied the order. On 28 February **Kamal Abualgassim**, brother of one of the executed officers, was arrested and held for two days. The families of the executed officers have staged demonstrations demanding to know where they are buried virtually every year since they were killed.

### Monthly report: March 1995

On 7 March, all 54 detainees then held in the "City Bank" ghost house were transferred to a special section of Kober prison. However, the pattern of detention was not interrupted. Among those arrested in March were **Ala'a Barud**, **Sami Ghazi Hassan** and **Nabil Mahmud Abdel Rahman**, detained for what the authorities described as "suspicious activity", and southerners **John Madut Majok** and **Stephen Wol**, held for "fraud and running an illegal organization" and "suspected acts of sabotage" respectively. None of these men were charged.

On 24 March **Suleiman Abu al-Gassim**, a little-known religious leader, was

detained with 13 of his followers. He was accused of "impersonating a prophet" and held until at least May. An official list issued in May explained the detention of the other 13 men with the phrase "a follower of Suleiman Abu al-Gassim".

Many of those arrested spent only a few days in detention. **Adila Zeibaq**, a researcher and women's rights activist, was held for three days. She was arrested in late March at Khartoum Airport just before her flight to the USA to attend a meeting on "*Building community in the face of violence*".

### Monthly report: April 1995

In April at least four Ugandans were arrested when diplomatic relations between Sudan and Uganda deteriorated. Each government accused the other of supporting armed opposition groups. On 10 April a senior Sudanese diplomat was expelled from Uganda. Four days later **Abdu Hassan Timan**, a former Ugandan army officer who had fled to Sudan in 1979, was arrested and allegedly tortured. Official sources said that he was detained for "spying on the Ugandan opposition".

On 24 April, the day after Uganda severed diplomatic ties with Sudan, **Mohey al-Din Nasim Ajut**, who worked at the Ugandan Embassy but did not have diplomatic status, was detained with three refugees: **Musa Mohamed Taher**, a Chadian married to a Ugandan, **Ahmad Morjan Ambaku**, and **Margaret Ruakoa**, both Ugandans. The three were apparently visiting Mohey al-Din Nasim Ajut when security officials came to arrest him. They remained held without charge until at least June.

## Monthly report: May 1995

***“There are no such violations of human rights in the Sudan”.***

Ali al-Nasri, President of the Sudan Bar Association, 23 May 1995,  
in a reply to a letter from an Amnesty International member

At the start of May, **Bishari ‘Abd al-Moneim Saleh**, a popular faith healer, was arrested and made to perform, televised, outside the Grand Mosque in Khartoum. When he failed to effect the immediate cure of patients brought before him, he was brought to a Public Order Court, convicted of causing a public disturbance and sentenced to 25 lashes and three months in prison.

There was a major crackdown on the Umma Party and the *Ansar* order of Islam during the month. On 9 May **Abu Bakr Abdel Magid al-Amir** was arrested in Khartoum. He is the secretary of Sadiq al-Mahdi, former Prime Minister, leader of the Umma Party and spiritual leader of the *Ansar* order, who made a speech attacking the ideology and policies of the military government on the following day, the Muslim feast of ‘Eid al-Addha. On 16 May **Sadiq al-Mahdi** was arrested. The authorities announced that he was being held for questioning about “subversive activities”. He was held in Kober Prison in solitary confinement until 26 August, when he was released under an amnesty which the authorities claimed was for all political detainees.

In the days after Sadiq al-Mahdi’s arrest, other members of the *Ansar* order and Umma Party were detained. Senior members arrested in Khartoum included **Sarah Nugdallah**, a member of the party’s executive and women’s committees, **Fadlalla**

**Burma Nasir**, a former cabinet minister, **Dr Ali Hassan Taj al-Din**, a former member of the Supreme Council of State, and **Abdel Nabi Ali Ahmad**, former Governor of Darfur. Sarah Nugdallah was released in July; the men were released in late August.

Dozens of other members of the Umma Party were arrested in the capital and other towns in central Sudan. By June, 39 members of the party were being held in Kober Prison in Khartoum alone. The majority were released in July and August.

Members of other political parties and trade unionists were also detained during May. **‘Abd al-Rahim Mohamed Minallah**, a former SCP member and trade unionist, was detained on 1 May. The authorities confiscated his computer and other equipment, apparently suspecting him of being involved in the production of *al-Maidan*, the official newspaper of the SCP, which has continued to publish despite being banned. He is reported to have spent two days in the partially closed “City Bank” ghost house, and then to have been held in Kober prison until September.

At least 15 men were detained in Port Sudan in late May. They included **Moatissim Siam** and **Suleiman Khalaf Allah**, both engineers, and **Abdallah Musa**, **Mahjoub al-Zubeir**, and **Ali al-Khattib**, who were reportedly trade union activists.

---

## Monthly report: June 1995

At the start of June there were more than 100 political detainees in Kober Prison. In addition to 39 members of the Umma Party, there were reportedly 14 members of the Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party, seven members of the SCP, 32 southerners and 13 non-Sudanese.

Amnesty International does not know when some of these detainees were arrested, nor when they were released. For example, **Fateh Nouri Abbas** and **Mohamed Suleiman**, former members of the Ba'ath Party, were known to be in detention in June. However, their names were not on an official list of detainees in May. **Yahya Mohamed Saleh**, a former SCP member, was also in detention in June. Southerners known to be in detention in June included **Michael Tut**,

**Deng Macam, Taban Loen, Kiir Malou and Ajaj Kong.**

Leftists and trade unionists were among those reported to have been arrested during the month. **Said Abdallah**, a former student activist, was detained on or around 5 June. He was held without charge or trial for several weeks. His sisters, **Badria** and **Isharaga**, were arrested with him, interrogated and ordered to report daily to the security authorities.

There were reports of further arrests in Port Sudan. **Abu Mohamed Abu Amna**, a doctor, and **Musa Hussain Mohamed** were among at least five local trade union and political activists detained without charge towards the end of the month.

## Monthly report: July 1995

Tension between Sudan and Egypt rose sharply after an attempt to assassinate the Egyptian President on 26 June during a visit to Addis Ababa. The Egyptian government accused the Sudanese authorities of backing the attack.

As relations deteriorated in early July, eight Egyptian nationals working for an Egyptian government-owned cement company in Khartoum were detained without charge. Three were deported to Egypt on 13 July; another was released after a few weeks and allowed to remain in Sudan; and three engineers -- **Mahmud al-Rashidi**, **Kamal Shalabi** and **Said Khalid** -- were held until 29 August when they, too, were deported. An eighth, **Barsum Nasif**, remained in detention.

Opposition political activists known to have been detained in July included four

veterans arrested at the start of the month and held without charge until late August. **Hassan Osman**, an economist working with the civil aviation authority and formerly an SCP member had been held without charge for several months in 1992 and 1993. **'Abd al-Fatah al-Rufai**, a trade unionist, had previously been detained in 1994. Also detained were **Mohamed Abdallah al-Meshawi**, a lawyer and former SCP activist, and **Kamal 'Abd al-Karim Mirghani**, an economist.

During July the security services tried to clamp down on the flow of information by confiscating unlicensed fax machines, although they subsequently denied it. Among the owners of unlicensed fax machines reported to have been arrested was **Ahmad Abdalla Akood**, a businessman, who was detained in Khartoum on 16 July.

### **Monthly report: August**

On 23 August, three days before the visit of a delegation of foreign dignitaries, the National Security Council declared that all political detainees "without exception" would be freed within 72 hours.

On 26 August, 32 detainees were set free. However, despite the government's assurances, not all political detainees were in fact released. Former SCP activists Yahya Mohamed Saleh (see June), Hassan Osman and 'Abd al-Rahim Mohamed Minallah (see July) were reported still to be in detention in September, as were seven members of the banned Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), including **Abakir Adam al-Tom**, **Kamal Hassan Salim** and **al-Tayib Mohamed Babiker**. Amnesty International believes that other detainees remained inside "ghost houses" in the capital and prisons outside Khartoum.

On 30 August President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir decreed the release of 18 prisoners convicted of political charges after unfair trials in 1991 and 1994. They included **al-Hajj 'Abd al-Rahman Abdallah Nugdalla** of the Umma Party, a former Minister, and **Mubarak Jadein** and **Gaafar Yassin Ahmad Abdullah**, convicted on the basis of uncorroborated confessions despite detailed evidence that they had been tortured.

At least one convicted political prisoner remained in prison. The authorities refused to release **Brigadier Mohamed Ahmad al-Rayah al-Faki** unless he withdrew his allegation that he had been raped and tortured by security men after his arrest. He refused. He was eventually released in February 1996.

## Monthly report: September

### *"The Sudan is now free of all political detainees"*

Abdul-Basit Sabdarat, Minister of Culture and Information, Sudan News Agency (SUNA)  
26 August 1995.

On 1 September security officials arrested **Mohamed Abdel Karim**, an Islamic cleric and teacher at Qur'an al-Karim University in Khartoum, and four men believed to be his followers. Mohamed Abdel Karim, an outspoken proponent of Islamist views, is reported to have publicly questioned the credibility of Dr Hassan al-Turabi, the government's ideological mentor.

On 2 September security men raided a house in al-Thawra, a suburb of Omdurman, and arrested 23 students and university graduates. The only woman in the group, **Majdoline Haj al-Tahir**, an agricultural student and translator for the British Embassy, was released after a week. Some of the men were tortured. **Ibrahim Fateh al-Rahman**, an agriculture student at the University of Khartoum, reportedly had his ribs fractured. Most of this group were held until January 1996, but **Adlan Ahmad Abdel Aziz**, a teacher arrested on several previous occasions, **Awad Bashir**, an arts graduate, and **al-Sir Babu Osman**, a former teacher and SCP member, were still in detention without charge in late March 1996. The authorities accused the group of being "communists" plotting sabotage.

On 11 September thousands of students on various campuses took to the

streets in anti-government demonstrations. There were clashes between demonstrators, student supporters of the government and security police. Live ammunition and tear gas were used to disperse the crowds and scores

of demonstrators were arrested. State-run radio called on members of two Islamist mass organizations to "undertake the necessary steps to repulse the aggression directed at Sudan".

Demonstrations and street fighting continued on 12 September. Government supporters, some of them reportedly armed, confronted demonstrating students in further violent clashes in Khartoum, Omdurman and Khartoum North. According to official sources two people were shot dead; unofficial sources allege that two students were killed in central Khartoum, three in Omdurman and two in Khartoum North. Hundreds of protestors were arrested and many were badly beaten. Twenty-four students temporarily held in an office in the Meridien Hotel were reportedly beaten and then bound so tightly that once untied they were unable to walk.

The government announced that "communists ... exploiting the relaxed political atmosphere following the release of political detainees" were behind the disturbances. A mass round-up of left-wing and liberal political activists began, leading to the arrest of scores of people who had played no role in the demonstrations. Prominent lawyers -- **Mustafa Abdel Gadir**, **Bushra Abdel Karim** and **Ali Ahmad al-Sayid** -- were among the first to be arrested. Mustafa Abdel Gadir was released within days; the other two men were held until late October.

At least four other lawyers who had previously defended political prisoners were arrested in mid-September. One, **Mohamed Abdallah al-Mishawi**, had spent less than

three weeks in freedom since being released from detention in late August.

After an OAU statement implicated Sudan in the June assassination attempt on the Egyptian President, on 12 September the authorities accused "Ethiopian elements" of also being involved in orchestrating the protests. Scores of arrests of Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees followed.

On 13 September there were further clashes on the University of Khartoum campus. The authorities confirmed that **Fayez Mohamed Ali**, a martial arts instructor, had been shot dead, but did not make clear the circumstances. Considerable violence was used by the security forces and their supporters; one student, **Rahmtalla Abdel Rahman**, was reportedly captured and extrajudicially executed in the Faculty of Engineering. Another, **Moatiz Abdelmoneim Khalifa**, had his arms deliberately broken.

Order was largely restored order by 14 September, although there were still reports of sporadic disturbances. SUNA, the official news agency, reported the Vice-Chancellor of Khartoum University saying that, "all the university students who were arrested in the recent incidents have been released". The reality was quite different. Suspected left-wing political activists and students were being arrested in large numbers.

A student arrested in Khartoum central market on 18 September described his experience. He was seized by a gang of 40 youths working with security officers, thrown into a truck and taken to a "ghost house" in the Khartoum suburb of *al-Amarat*:

*"I was beaten and kicked on all possible  
body parts with a black*

### **The September 1995 demonstrations**

**2 September: 23 students and graduates are arrested in Omdurman. The authorities later claim they are “communists” plotting sabotage.**

**9 September: students at the University of Khartoum holding a silent vigil calling the release of colleagues arrested the week before are attacked by Islamist students. Meanwhile, the authorities announce an increase in the price of bread.**

**11 September: students from all the main university campuses begin simultaneous marches. They are joined by members of the public. Clashes take place with police and government supporters. Scores of demonstrators are arrested.**

**For the relatives of detainees, the experience of a family member being arrested can be traumatic. The father of a student arrested during the demonstrations described his efforts to find his son:**

**“We searched all the capital’s police stations and did not come across him. Finally we learned he had been moved to the offices of the security organs and it came to my knowledge that he had been beaten and tortured. Then he was thrown into a bed of one of the city’s hospitals to get better. This is according to what was published in the paper. However, we searched all the capital’s hospitals and did not find a trace of him.”**

**The young man was eventually released in January 1996.**

**Throughout November and December there is a gradual series of releases.**

**By January 1996 all but three men arrested on 02 September are reported to have been freed. The three appear to be accused of organizing the disturbances -- but no charges are brought against them. They are known to remain in jail at the end of March.**

*hosepipe and with hands and feet. I had to stand for five hours with my face to the wall. There were six other detainees there who were ill-treated in the same way”.*

In the evening he was taken to the Sudan Security headquarters, then, the next morning, to another “ghost house”. There he met more than 40 other detainees, some of whom he recognized as fellow students and others as former SCP members. Five southern Sudanese “who had been badly beaten because they were accused of working with John Garang” were also held.

The next day he and 23 other detainees were transferred to Kober prison where he encountered about 70 other detainees. They included six Ethiopians and

Eritreans; **Siddiq Yousif al-Nour**, a former SCP activist and engineer arrested on 2 September, who remained in detention without charge or trial until December; **Sa’udi Darraj**, a trade union activist, and **Awad Haroun**, an accountant. After 24 hours in Kober Prison the student was released.

Most of the students were released within a few days. However, some were tortured. **Shehab Ali Yousif**, a student at Omdurman Ahlia University, was severely beaten on 13 September. He was alleged to have publicly torn up a copy of the Qur’an and the authorities claimed he was then beaten by other students. However, independent sources say he was beaten by security officers and government supporters after being arrested. He was held until January 1996 and never charged.

The crackdown on suspected leftists and liberals continued through September with scores of new arrests. **Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi**, former President of the disbanded Central Foundry Workers Union and a former SCP member, was arrested in September. He was still in detention in October. He had been arrested many times before, most recently in 1994. **Mohamed Ibrahim Abdu**, commonly known as “**Kabaj**”, was arrested on 29 September and remained in detention without charge until mid-January 1996. Kabaj had been part of a banned left-wing faction called the Alliance of National Democratic Forces created by former members of the SCP. **Yahya Mukwar**, a doctor and former member of the banned DUP, was also arrested and held into October.

### Monthly report: October 1995

*“Arbitrary arrest and detention are not existing in the Sudan, and due process of law is prevailing”*

“Response from the Government of Sudan to the interim report on the situation of human rights in the Sudan...prepared by Mr Gaspar Biro, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights”  
21 November 1995

In early October **Colonel Awad al-Karim Garbawi**, a former soldier, “disappeared” in eastern Sudan. Family and friends had not managed to trace him by mid-November.

There were reports of arrests in Hasaheisa, a town some 80 miles southeast of Khartoum. **‘Abd al-Karim ‘Abd al-Nur**, a government employee, and **Seif al-Din Ramadan**, a medical assistant, were among five men detained at the start of the month. The authorities gave no indication of why they were being held.

More prisoners arrested after the demonstrations in Khartoum in September were released. Among them were four engineers, including **Nadir Mohamed al-Amin**; **Ahmad Anwar Hassan**, a suspected left-wing political activist; and **Abdallah Osman**, a trader in Khartoum central market.

### Monthly report: November 1995

---

***“Sudan is free from political detainees and prisoners”***

“Response from the Government of Sudan to the interim report on the situation of human rights in the Sudan...prepared by Mr Gaspar Biro, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights”  
21 November 1995

In the weeks leading up to a vote in the UN General Assembly on human rights in Sudan, there were few arrests. However, on 18 November **Omar al-Sayid**, a doctor, and **Minallah ‘Abd al-Wahab** and **al-Tahir al-Riqayiq**, both former trade union activists, were arrested and held for five days. After their release they were made to report daily to security offices.

More detainees arrested in September were released. Among them was **Kamal ‘Abd al-Karim Mirghani**, a former SCP member who used to work as an economist with the Bank of Sudan but had been purged following the 1989 coup. He had been arrested on 19 September, a little over three weeks after being released under the 26 August amnesty.

### **Monthly report: December 1995**

Thirty-one southerners from Juba were reported to be held in a “ghost house” on Street 41 in the Khartoum suburb of al-Amarat. They were apparently suspected of collaborating with the SPLA but no charges were brought against them. The arrest at the end of December of **Mark Lotede**, a Roman Catholic priest from Juba, was possibly connected. The authorities said that he had confessed to setting up an organization to recruit students to the SPLA and had planned to blow up security installations. However, after his release on 16 January there were reports that he and a student, **Simon Peter**, had been tortured into confessing to the alleged plot.

Neither man was named on a list of 58 prisoners issued by the Sudan Government before the UN vote called “*Political detainees who have been freed recently in the Sudan*”. The list named some detainees such as Sadiq al-Mahdi, released in August, some convicted political prisoners such as al-Haj

More detainees held since September were released. They included left-wing political activists such as **Ali Khalifa**, an engineer and former Secretary General of the disbanded Union of Professionals and Civil Servants, and **Salah Hassan Said Samareit**, an economist formerly active in the SCP who spent nine months in detention in 1994.

**Adlan Ahmad Abdel Aziz**

**Arrested on 2 September with 22 students and recent graduates after a raid on a house in Omdurman, Adlan Ahmad Abdel Aziz was one of three members of the group known to remain in detention without charge or trial at the end of March.**

**The authorities appear to suspect that he played a role in organizing anti-government demonstrations in September 1995.**

**A 36-year teacher sacked for his political views, Adlan Ahmad Abdel Aziz is a former activist in the banned Sudan Communist Party (SCP).**

**He has been arrested on several previous occasions. While held between September 1991 and February 1992 he was tortured and beaten.**

**Amnesty is calling for his immediate and unconditional release unless he is charged with a recognisably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.**

**The failure of the authorities to do this, at least up to seven months after his detention, suggests that they have little evidence against him.**

---

‘Abd al-Rahman Abdalla Nugdalla, also released in August, and some detainees, such as **Kamal al-Gizouli**, a former senior SCP

member, arrested in September as part of the round-up of leftists and released 10 days later.

**Brigadier Mohamed Ahmad al-Rayah al-Faki**

**Arrested in August 1991 with over 80 other soldiers and civilians, in October 1991 he was sentenced to death (which was immediately commuted to life imprisonment) at an unfair military trial. He claimed that he was raped and sexually abused while undergoing torture which also included being shocked with electric cattle prods.**

**In July 1992 his sentence was further reduced to 10 years' imprisonment.**

**In August 1993 he petitioned the Minister of Justice about the alleged rape. His letter received widespread publicity outside Sudan.**

**In September 1993 the UN Special Rapporteur on Sudan tried to visit him in prison. He was mysteriously transferred to another jail and then back again after the Special Rapporteur had left. The Special Rapporteur was eventually granted access to him in December: the Brigadier repeated his allegations.**

**In November 1993 the authorities announced they were investigating the alleged torture. There has been no public report of this investigation, nor any evidence that it took place.**

**As part of the August 1995 amnesty, the authorities attempted to release Brigadier Mohamed Ahmad al-Rayah on condition that he withdraw his complaint. He refused.**

**In February 1996 he was eventually released. Amnesty International has not managed to establish if the release was unconditional.**

**The torture and ill-treatment he has bravely exposed from prison remains an unresolved issue.**

**Monthly report: January 1996**

On 5 January two Roman Catholic clerics, **Romeo Todo**, a priest, and **Paul Lomana**, a seminarian, were arrested in Khartoum, reportedly for links with the SPLA. No charges were brought against them and they were released in mid-January. Also in mid-January there were several arrests of people

apparently suspected of links with the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). In mid-January, while the NDA was meeting in Asmara, **Mustafa Awad al-Karim**, formerly a leading member of the Pharmacists Union and a left-wing member of the DUP, **Hassabu Ibrahim**, a leading member of the

Farmers' Union, **al-Sir Mekki**, a self-employed businessman, and as many as 12 others were detained. They are reported to have been accused of having contact with the Sudanese National Alliance Forces, part of the military wing of the NDA. They were not apparently charged but were held at least until mid-March.

On 29 January **Lieutenant General Ahmad al-Badawi**, a retired airforce officer,

### **Monthly report: February 1996**

**Awad al-Karim Mohamed Mirghani**, Chairman of the NDA during the uprising against the government of President Gaafar Nimeiri in 1985, was arrested in Khartoum on

and **Farah Hassan Suleiman**, a lawyer, were arrested in Khartoum. Four other men -- two mechanics, a doctor and a former civil servant -- were arrested in the following days. They were reportedly suspected of recruiting men for military training with the Sudanese National Alliance Forces in Eritrea. All are reported to be detained without charge. **Moslih Said**, a truck driver, arrested in eastern Sudan on the same grounds, was reportedly tortured.

4 February. He is reported to be suspected of having contact with the NDA in exile. He remained in detention without charge at least until the end of March.

## **The war and human rights**

There has been an upsurge in fighting in the civil war since January 1995. Both government forces and the armed opposition have committed abuses with complete impunity.

Southern armed groups are becoming increasingly fragmented, and semi-autonomous armed bands have emerged, often based on a particular ethnic group, and some armed and supported by the government. From a human rights perspective, the emergence of such armed bands is particularly disturbing because of their apparent lack of accountability. They enable government forces to prosecute the war while denying involvement in the violation of human rights.

Human rights violations are being committed by Sudan Security officials, the PDF, the army and allied militia in most parts of the war zone. For example, in the Nuba

Mountains there are allegations of widespread abduction of children, of arrests and of extrajudicial executions.<sup>6</sup> However, this report focuses on northern Bahr al-Ghazal, where the government's PDF and two allied militia have wreaked havoc, and on the response of the SPLM/A and SSIM/A to deliberate and arbitrary killings by their troops in other parts of Sudan in October 1994 and July 1995 respectively.

### **Killing and kidnapping in northern Bahr al-Ghazal**

In northern Bahr al-Ghazal, three different government-backed groups have attacked civilians, leading to immense disruption, food shortages and the spread of disease.

The PDF, part of the government's military apparatus, is being used to clear the strategically important railway linking north and south Sudan. Ethnic militia known as *murahaleen* formed among the cattle-owning Arab peoples of South Darfur and South Kordofan are being allowed to raid lands occupied by members of the Dinka ethnic group both east and west of the railway line, often working in a coordinated manner with the PDF. Further east, an armed band led by a former senior SPLA officer, Kerubino Kuanyin Bol, is raiding villages and cattle camps from a base in the government-controlled town of Gogrial.

Each of these forces has massacred unarmed men and women. Each has abducted children, many of whom are missing -- some have been killed and others taken into domestic slavery or into government-regulated special schools.

The PDF has cleared the area around the railway line every year since 1992. Between January and March 1995 there were reports of fighting along the railway line in northern Bahr al-Ghazal in advance of military trains moving south to Wau. Horse-mounted PDF troops and *murahaleen* militia attacked villages some distance from the line, stealing cattle, destroying homesteads and displacing thousands of civilians.

On 25 March PDF troops and allied militias attacked the small town of Nyamlell, an important centre for humanitarian relief to the west of the railway. More than 80 men and women were shot dead. More than 200 children were abducted. Some are known to be in the homes of militia members in South Darfur, where they are being held as little more than domestic slaves. Others are missing, their whereabouts unknown.

Akuac Amet, an elderly woman, described what happened to her and her family. After being caught at her home by the raiders:

---

<sup>6</sup> In July 1995 African Rights published a 344-page report on the human rights situation in the Nuba Mountains, entitled *Facing genocide: the Nuba of Sudan*.

*“They beat me unconscious with a big club...then they shot my four sons who were tending cattle and abducted my daughter Ajak. They took all my property.”*

Villagers fleeing the attackers hid in long grass. Macar Bol Akon's wife was captured with her two children. She was beaten to death and the children were abducted. Four women and a man, Isaac Awusa, were reportedly captured and shot dead in the compound of a foreign non-governmental relief organization. Several people were reportedly forced inside huts and burned alive. Akuil Garang's two children were reported to have been burned alive; she fled but was caught, speared and shot. Her youngest son is reported to have been abducted while she lay unconscious.<sup>7</sup>

#### Akuil Garang

On 24 April a fire destroyed the market place at Meiram, a small government-controlled town along the railway line in South Kordofan. Meiram is an important assembly point for militia and PDF members, as well as a centre for food distribution to the displaced. After the fire, *murahaleen* turned their weapons on displaced

---

<sup>7</sup> Christian Solidarity International, October 1995.

Dinka, killing 25. A pitched battle followed, in which four militia members were also killed. In this case -- outside the war zone -- the local authorities, the police and the army intervened to prevent further killings. It does not appear, however, that any *murahaleen* were brought to justice.

In May 1995 PDF troops accompanying another train raided Kuajok, Manyok and other villages east of the railway and south of Gogrial. Scores of women and children are reported to have been taken to Udum, a small station 13 miles north of Aweil, where they loaded into wagons and taken north.

PDF and *murahaleen* militia appear to regard women and children as legitimate spoils of war. Some captives are used as domestic slaves, often tending animals or working in the fields. Children who have escaped have reported that failed attempts to flee have led to them being beaten when recaptured. It appears that some children are sold on by their captors to new "owners".

Some families searching for their children travel into South Kordofan and South Darfur and attempt to buy the children back. Prices reportedly vary from around two to 25 cows, or the cash equivalent. The father of a child taken at Nyamlell in March, who was asked for five cows for the return of his son, described the problems faced by hundreds of families:

*" I have nothing. My home was burnt, everything I had was taken...The owner told my brother-in-law to go and find the cows and then come back for my child. But I don't have anything or any way to raise the money I need."*

Dinka seeking to free kidnapped children take considerable risks by travelling in the home areas of *murahaleen* and PDF members, areas where they are liable to be suspected of involvement with the SPLA. They report that while some police and courts are prepared to take action to free children when a clear cut case of abduction is brought before them, the majority are indifferent or even obstruct their efforts to locate children. Others report local government and PDF officials intervening to free persons arrested by the police on suspicion of holding slaves. Amnesty International does not know of a single case where a kidnapper or person suspected of holding domestic slaves has been prosecuted.

**Three brothers: two shot dead, one survived**

**In late 1995 the brothers Dut, Ajou and Garang were captured by PDF on a raid into the lands of the Malual Kwil section of Dinka in northern Bahr al-Ghazal.**

**They were taken to Abu Lider in South Kordofan and set to work in the fields. Garang, 12 years old and the youngest, was sold to a nearby farmer.**

**The brothers decided to escape. Horse mounted Murahaleen militia men hunted them down. Dut and Ajou were killed. Garang hid and survived to reach a town further north.**

There are also reports of children being confined in special schools in remote areas. For example, in March and April 1995 PDF members reportedly took children abducted in northern Bahr al-Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains to a *khalwa* (a school for the teaching of Arabic and the Qur'an), run by the PDF at Abu Dikiri on the southwest fringes of the Nuba Mountains. The school appears to be run as an armed camp. A number of children are reported to have been shot dead in April after trying to leave. Older children were reportedly trucked onward to unknown destinations in other parts of Sudan.

Some of the worst disruption in northern Bahr al-Ghazal in 1995 has been caused by Kerubino Kuanyin Bol's forces. Formerly one of the most senior commanders in the SPLA, Kerubino Kuanyin Bol was arrested in Addis Ababa in 1987 by Ethiopian security officials cooperating with the SPLA and held in an

SPLA prison in Sudan until 1992. He was reportedly tortured. After his release he joined SPLA-United (renamed the SSIA in late 1994), led by Dr Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon. He returned to his home area of Gogrial in 1994 to recruit for SPLA-United/SSIA. While purporting to be fighting the Sudanese Government, by the start of 1995 he was operating from a military base in the government-controlled town of Gogrial, armed and supplied by the authorities. In January 1995 he was expelled from the SSIA. He is reported to have renamed his group the Gogrial Aweil Nyamllel Tonj Rumbek and Yirrol (GANTRY) Movement.

Throughout 1995 there were attacks by the GANTRY militia on villages in central and eastern Bahr al-Ghazal, many of them centres for food distribution. For example, in January and February 1995 the militia attacked Lietnhom, Maluakon and Turalei and burned them to the ground, leaving thousands of people destitute. On 16 September 1995 Panthou was attacked. Stephen Gatuma Kamau, a Kenyan employee of *Medicins sans Frontieres*-Belgium, was taken prisoner. He was marched, along with over 100 women and children who were forced to carry loot, to the GANTRY camp in Gogrial. The women and children were reportedly allowed to join the displaced in Gogrial. Stephen Gatuma Kamau was held until 23 October. On 9 December, three people were reported to have been killed when the GANTRY militia again attacked Lietnhom. A few days later Akon was attacked.

Food supplies in the area have been severely disrupted by attacks on villages and relief centres, combined with the government's refusal to allow the UN Operation Lifeline

---

Sudan access to northern Bahr al-Ghazal for much of 1995. Tens of thousands of people have been forced to flee and tens of thousands more are vulnerable to shortages. In June 1995 a Minister in the Bahr al-Ghazal state government announced that over the previous six months the number of internally displaced moving into areas under government control had risen to 286,000.

The Sudanese authorities deny responsibility for the militias' actions and blame the destruction and loss of life on inter-communal strife and "traditional" patterns of raiding. In a response dated 21 November 1995 to a report submitted to the UN General Assembly by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan, the government said:

*"In the Sudanese tribal fights, which normally result in captives and prisoners of war on both sides of the conflict, there is no such intention [to take slaves] since the fights would only break out to get more pasture and water for the cattle and not to collect slaves as was the case with the white man decades ago".*

According to the government, therefore, the raids and abductions in northern Bahr al-Ghazal are "traditional" tribal practices, motivated by competition for resources. It thereby denies any responsibility for the killings and kidnappings.

Cattle raiding and competition over resources are indeed long-standing aspects of life among communities whose economic survival in a precarious ecological zone is dependent on seasonal patterns of rainfall and flooding. So too are cooperation and negotiation to resolve disputes. However, there is nothing "traditional" about militia members being armed by the Sudanese authorities, about the active cooperation of militia and military units in the field, or about the use of militia to attack regional centres. Nor is the trade in children "traditional" -- the seizing of children in raids was stamped out in the early 20th century by effective government intervention. The Sudan Government provides bases and weaponry to militias and cooperates in military operations with them. The continuing failure of the authorities to act to prevent human rights violations by forces over which it has control or with which it is prepared to cooperate or to arm leads to the inevitable conclusion that the authorities support the actions of the perpetrators.

### **The SPLA, the SSIA and human rights**

On 30 July 1995 SPLA soldiers and armed Dinka, Agar and Atuot civilians from the Akot and Aluakluak areas combined to attack Nuer villages and cattle camps around the small centre of Ganyliel in southern Upper Nile.

Ganyliel is a relatively densely populated area. Its villages are scattered collections of homesteads, each with its own cattle byre known as a *luak*, and each surrounded by its

own fields. By late July 1995 most of the cattle had been brought back to the cattle byres from more distant camps where they had been pastured during the dry season.

The attack is reported to have begun in the early hours of the morning. First the raiders attacked villages northwest of Ganyliel. They then split into three parties and over the hours that followed, both before and after dawn, they looted and burned villages around Dhuolmanyang, Gualaguk and Laidit. Over 200 civilians, the majority of them women and children, were reportedly killed. Thousands of cattle, sheep and goats were driven away. Some standing crops were slashed and destroyed.

Many of those killed were indiscriminately shot as they fled. Others were captured and then deliberately killed. An eye-witness to the attack on Bongkhal, which took place shortly after first light, has described seeing three women with their babies being caught by SPLA soldiers. Two of the women were shot dead. One woman and the babies were killed with large knives. A woman who survived the attack on the village of Manyal had one child shot and two others hacked to death. Nearby an elderly woman was cut to death. An infant was killed by being thrown in the air and left to hit the ground. Another eye-witness described seeing SPLA soldiers capturing Nuer civilians and then handing them over to Dinka civilians to be speared to death.

The attack on Ganyliel was in retaliation for an earlier assault by SSIA soldiers and Nuer civilians on Akot and the nearby Tharagep cattle camp. Akot is an important regional centre for both the SPLA and for relief and development assistance. The villages around it are similar to those around Ganyliel, except that cattle are kept all year round in camps containing thousands of animals.

In the raid on Akot and Tharagep, on 22 October 1994, more than 100 civilians are reported to have been killed and as many as 2,000 cattle stolen. Civilians were shot indiscriminately as they tried to escape. Adith Malok, a midwife in Akot medical centre, was shot dead minutes after she had delivered a baby when she ran outside. Others were captured and then beaten and speared to death. A survivor of the attack on Tharagep, Macol Mayang, was beaten about the head with an iron bar. He survived because he fell unconscious. SSIA soldiers and Nuer civilians looted Akot during the attack; after the assault SPLA soldiers and local people looted stores belonging to foreign relief and development organizations.

These attacks follow the pattern of fighting between the SPLA and SSIA involving deliberate attacks on civilians detailed in previous Amnesty International reports. In the past, the SPLM/A has remained silent on the issue of responsibility for human rights abuses. Recently, however, there have been indications that some senior members of the SPLM/A have recognized the need to take responsibility for human rights abuses

committed by SPLA members. These developments stem from a decision by the First National Convention in April 1994 to strengthen civilian involvement in the organization.

In 1995 both the SPLM/A and the SSIM/A signed agreements with UN Operation Lifeline Sudan establishing ground rules for the delivery of humanitarian assistance. These include a commitment to respecting basic principles laid down in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and the 1977 Additional Protocols to the Geneva Conventions. While the ground rules are primarily about humanitarian issues, the international treaties to which the SPLM/A and SSIM/A have committed themselves contain important human rights provisions. The ground rules represent a statement by these organizations about the standards to which they aspire (and which are also expected of UN agencies and non-governmental organizations).

Amnesty International welcomed the SPLM/A's signature of the agreement as an important act in a report entitled *Monitoring human rights* published in October 1995.<sup>8</sup> At that time Amnesty International was not aware that SSIM/A had also signed it. Amnesty International pointed out that the SPLM/A was already bound as a minimum to apply Common Article Three of the Geneva Conventions, and went on to say that "whether or not these steps are meaningful will be determined by the SPLA's conduct".

Since the ground rules were signed the Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Association (SRRA), the humanitarian wing of the SPLM/A, and the Relief Association for the Southern Sudan (RASS), the equivalent wing of the SSIM/A, have cooperated with UN Operation Lifeline Sudan in holding a series of meetings to explain the ground rules. In October Amnesty International representatives attended such a meeting in Chukudum, an SPLM/A-controlled village in southern Sudan. It was attended by over 100 civilians and SPLA officers, as well as by representatives of Sudanese and foreign non-governmental organizations working in Chukudum. The SRRA team explored the links between the principles underlying the ground rules and southern Sudanese socio-cultural traditions. However, the human rights implications of the ground rules agreement were not made clear.

The agreement therefore currently represents an opportunity to build human rights awareness rather than a decisive intervention for human rights protection. This was underlined to Amnesty International in a meeting in October 1995 with SSIM/A leader Dr Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon. He and his advisers insisted that the agreement did not commit the SSIM/A to respecting international standards for the protection of human rights.

---

<sup>8</sup> In January 1995 Amnesty International called on the SPLM/A to make a public commitment to the humanitarian principles enshrined in the Geneva Conventions.

In September 1995 the SPLM/A held a large meeting of its officers, part of which was attended by civilians and Sudanese and foreign non-governmental organizations. Public criticism was encouraged. The opinions that were voiced from within the SPLM/A included criticism of human rights abuse by the SPLA. At the meeting the SPLM/A committed itself to setting up a verification committee to investigate alleged violations of children's rights and the ground rules. Again, this is a welcome development -- but it is not yet clear that it has been put into practice.

In October 1995 Amnesty International representatives met Salva Kiir Mayardit, Chief of Staff of the SPLA and Deputy Chairman of the SPLM, and four Regional Governors and senior commanders. The officers were critical of Amnesty International's reporting of alleged abuses by the SPLA. They argued that there had been mistakes in the past, but that, since the First National Convention in 1994, the human rights situation had changed. They questioned Amnesty International's objectives in repeatedly raising incidents which had taken place several years before, suggesting that the organization was politically motivated.

The Amnesty International representatives raised the killings in Ganyliel. Salva Kiir Mayardit said that the killings had been carried out by cattle raiders, and described cattle raiding as an endemic problem between the Dinka and the Nuer. Although he conceded that SPLA personnel may have taken part in the raid, he denied that the attack was authorized.

Cattle raids are part of life in this area of Sudan and civilians in the Akot area undoubtedly wanted revenge for the October 1994 attack. However, information received by Amnesty International indicates that SPLA officers in command in Karic and Akot organized the raid. About half the attacking force was made up of SPLA troops, most from Karic and Akot, some from Mvolo, an SPLA post in Western Equatoria south of Akot, and some, reportedly, from around Tonj. Even if SPLA officers did not organize the attack, the large scale involvement of SPLA personnel makes the organization accountable for their actions.<sup>9</sup>

The Amnesty International representatives asked what steps the SPLA had taken to investigate the incident. The procedure described involved the Regional Governor contacting the Divisional Commander, who in turn contacted local commanders and local

---

<sup>9</sup> SPLA detachments in the Yirol area, east of Akot, are reported to have refused to take part. The chiefs of Dinka sections from Yirol were actually in the Ganyliel area holding peace talks with their Nuer counterparts when the raid took place.

chiefs. The officers pointed out that Ganyiel is in SSIA territory and that therefore an on-the-spot investigation was not possible.

It is true that the SPLA could not mount an investigation in Ganyiel itself. However, the inquiry outlined in no way constituted a thorough, systematic investigation. It was not independent and contained no safeguards against the only people being asked for information being the very people responsible for the abuses. It does not appear to have been pursued with any vigour nor to have led to any action against alleged human rights abusers.

The killings at Ganyiel were committed within days of the signing of the agreement on ground rules. The SPLM/A's failure to take action shows that the pattern of inadequate SPLM/A responses to abuses by its troops has not yet been broken. The inadequacy of the SPLM/A reaction underlines how much work remains to be done if it is to establish genuine human rights protection.

Amnesty International representatives also raised the Akot incident with Dr Riek Machar Teny Dhurgon of the SSIM/A. His response was similar to that of the SPLM/A. He said that he had tried to find out the facts of what had happened in Akot but that this had "proved difficult". He indicated that he had not transferred the commander from the area, but acknowledged that the incident raised important issues about the control and training of troops.

By the time this report is published, the SPLM/A will have held a conference on "Civil Society and the Organization of Civil Authority in the New Sudan", currently scheduled for late April 1996. Its aims include developing policies for establishing effective, efficient and accountable structures of civil administration; developing an independent, effective and efficient system for the administration of justice; and developing mechanisms to nurture the growth and effective functioning of civil institutions.

Amnesty International urges the SPLM/A to address human rights issues directly. A strong civil administration is no guarantee of respect for human rights. A functioning judicial system is vital, but will not protect human rights if laws are inconsistent with international human rights standards or if procedures do not allow, for example, the right of appeal to an independent body. Strengthening the institutions of civil society (including non-governmental human rights organizations) is a fundamental long-term step towards holding those with power accountable. However, its success depends upon creating the freedom for such institutions to operate without interference.

Amnesty International's message is simple. The resource constraints and logistical problems which hinder both the SPLM/A and the SSIM/A cannot justify continued failure

to take practical measures to improve respect for human rights. It is easy to hide behind such constraints to avoid taking difficult action, but generalizations about the importance of human rights are useless if not backed by action.

The SPLM/A and the SSIM/A have to take action on human rights which addresses the real seat of power. For both organizations this remains the military. Soldiers who commit abuses must answer for their actions. Strict control should be kept over all military units and clear orders should be given prohibiting the deliberate and arbitrary killing of civilians.

To be effective, action has to be based on a proper assessment of the facts. Mechanisms to establish the facts in cases of human rights abuse are therefore a top priority. Allegations of abuse should be promptly investigated by impartial systems of inquiry which have sufficient independence to be credible and which issue public reports. The leadership should respond publicly to such reports, indicating what steps they are taking in the light of the report's recommendations.

Both the SPLM/A and the SSIM/A should explore mechanisms of investigation which can work across the borders of territory controlled by each without hindrance. This would require the politically difficult step of agreeing that human rights issues transcend narrow interests. It could involve the creation of an institution independent of each group but respected by both.

## **Recommendations**

Sudan's future depends on establishing respect for human rights. Otherwise, there can be no hope for lasting solutions to the country's many problems.

Sudan is party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Slavery Convention (as amended) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The government is obliged under international law to respect the human rights provisions embodied within these treaties. Amnesty International is calling on the government to translate its obligations into domestic law and -- above all -- into practice.

Sudan has signed but not yet ratified the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It is obliged under international law not to take any action that would defeat the Convention's objective and purpose. Amnesty International is calling on the government to be firm about its stated opposition to torture by ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

---

In the report *Sudan: "The tears of orphans" -- no future without human rights* published in January 1995 Amnesty International set out detailed practical recommendations to the Sudan Government, the SPLM/A and the SSIM/A. Each one of those recommendations remains relevant.

In addition to the recommendations made in that report, Amnesty International is now specifically calling on the **Sudanese Government:**

**1. to end arbitrary detention without charge or trial, torture and ill-treatment.**

Immediate steps to be taken include closing all secret detention centres in all towns and repealing legislation, in particular the National Security Act 1994, which provides for detention without charge or trial.

Amnesty International is also calling for the immediate and unconditional release, unless they are to be brought promptly to fair trial on recognisably criminal charges, of Adlan Ahmad Abdel Aziz, al-Sir Babu Osman and Awad Bashir (detained in September 1995); Mustapha Awad al-Karim, Hassabu Ibrahim, al-Sir Mekki and nine other men (detained in mid-January 1996); Lieutenant General Ahmad al-Badawi, Farah Hassan Suleiman and five others (detained in late January 1996); and Awad al-Karim Mohamed Mirghani (detained in February 1996).

**2. to prevent extrajudicial executions, kidnappings and abductions.**

Immediate steps to be taken include bringing all army soldiers and PDF troops under strict chain of command control. *Murahaleen*, the GANTRY militia and any other militia operating outside the chain of command but with official support and acquiescence should be prohibited and disbanded.

Amnesty International is also calling specifically for an investigation into allegations that the PDF is holding abducted children at a special school in Abu Dikiri and that children seeking to escape have been shot dead.

**3. to locate women and children abducted from northern Bahr al-Ghazal and the Nuba Mountains and to reunite them with their families.**

Immediate steps to be taken include establishing a registry of located women and children accessible to family members in Kordofan, Darfur, Aweil and Khartoum; ensuring that the military, the police, local government officials, chiefs and magistrates are given strict instructions to search out abducted women and children and to provide every assistance and protection to family members seeking to locate missing relatives; and ensuring that effective judicial remedies are available that enable

relatives, their lawyers or other representatives to obtain the release of anyone held by a captor or other “owner”.

**4.to put an end to the apparent complicity of government forces in domestic slave-holding and trade in captives or slaves by taking measures to eradicate these practices.**

Immediate steps include the prosecution of anyone found to be holding or dealing in abducted women and children.

**5. to end the culture of impunity.**

Immediate steps include repealing legislation, notably the National Security Act 1994, which indemnifies security officials from prosecution for offences carried out in the course of their duties; amending the penal code so that the judicial penalty for torture is commensurate with the gravity of the crime; and bringing to justice all soldiers, officials and members of militia groups responsible for human rights violations, including extrajudicial executions, abduction and torture.

**6. to mount prompt, thorough and impartial investigations into all reports of human rights violations.**

In particular, the organization is calling for an urgent investigation into the alleged torture and rape of Brigadier Mohamed Ahmad al-Rayah al-Faki.

**7.to abolish cruel, inhuman and degrading punishments in law, including the death penalty.**

**8.to renew cooperation with the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Sudan.**

In addition to the recommendations to the SPLM/A and the SSIM/A detailed in its January 1995 report, Amnesty International is calling on both organizations to:

**9.to take concrete steps to end deliberate and arbitrary killings by their soldiers.**

Immediate steps include giving clear orders prohibiting such killings and ensuring that strict control is kept over all units involved in operations.

**10.to create independent and impartial systems of internal investigation into allegations of human rights abuse.**

Amnesty International is calling specifically for thorough investigations to be mounted by the SSIM/A into deliberate and arbitrary killings during the October 1994 raid on Akot and by the SPLM/A into deliberate and arbitrary killings during the July 1995 raid on Ganyiel. In addition the organization urges both movements seek ways of creating independent and impartial mechanisms that could investigate incidents involving the troops of one faction which have taken place in territory controlled by the other.

Amnesty International is calling on the **Sudan Government**, the **SPLM/A** and the **SSIM/A**:

**11. to invite a UN human rights monitoring team to work inside Sudan, to commit themselves to cooperating with it and to allowing it to operate without interference.**

Amnesty International calls on the **international community**, as represented by the member states of the **UN**:

**12. to invest in creating a properly resourced, appropriately skilled and adequately mandated monitoring program.**

Amnesty International calls on the **OAU** and its member states:

**13. to look at ways to help bring about human rights improvements in Sudan.**

Specifically, the OAU should seek means to influence the Sudanese Government to implement the recommendations contained in the OAU's African Commission on Human and People's Rights resolution of March 1995.

Amnesty International calls on **IGADD** member states and the loose grouping of states acting as "Friends of IGADD":

**14. to seek ways of supporting grassroots work on human rights issues by Sudanese civil society, including non-governmental organizations, as part of the search for ways forward to build peace.**