

UA 238/95

Prisoners of Conscience / Fear of Torture 16 October 1995

SUDAN Mohamed Ibrahim Abdu (known as Kabaj), businessman
Saudi Darraj, trade unionist

Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi, trade unionist

Ahmad Osman, trade unionist

Atif Haroun, accountant

Kamal 'Abd al-Karim Mirghani, economist

Yahya Mukwar, doctor

Awad Gibreel, graduate

Amnesty International fears that the eight men named above may be facing torture in incommunicado detention. Furthermore, it believes that the eight are prisoners of conscience, detained solely because of their history of non-violent political activity.

Mohamed Ibrahim Abdu, popularly known as Kabaj, was reportedly arrested on 29 September 1995. His family in Sudan have not seen him since and his whereabouts remain unknown. The other seven men are reported to have been arrested on various dates on or shortly after 12 September and are also detained without charge or trial by the security services in an unknown location.

These arrests are part of a security clampdown following widespread anti-government street protests in Khartoum, the capital of Sudan, and other northern Sudanese cities between 11 and 14 September 1995. The authorities have blamed leftists, communists and "foreigners" for the demonstrations. Yahya Mukwar is reported to have been a member of the banned Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and the other seven are reported to hold left-wing political views.

However, there is no reliable evidence that the men named above played any role in the protests, and the authorities appear to have used events on the streets as a pretext to arrest prominent non-violent critics of the government.

Many of those named above have been arrested on several previous occasions: Kamal 'Abd al-Karim Mirghani was only released from detention on 26 August 1995 after being arrested in July. The authorities claimed that his and other releases around the same time marked the release of all political detainees in Sudan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Other political prisoners detained in connection with the demonstrations have been badly beaten. One young man was reportedly held briefly by security officers who broke both his arms. An intermediate school student arrested on 12 September was beaten in incommunicado detention before being dumped from a vehicle outside his home on the evening of 14 September.

Another detainee, arrested on 18 September and since released, has reported: *"I was beaten and kicked on all possible body parts with a black hosepipe and with hands and feet. I had to stand for six hours with my face to the wall"*.

In testimony which underlines how all detainees are at risk of torture when arrested by Sudan Security, the detainee reports how, at a "ghost house" located in the Khartoum suburb of al-'Amarat, he met six other detainees arrested in connection with the demonstrations beaten in the same way and *"five southern Sudanese who had been beaten badly because they were accused of working with John Garang"* (the leader of the armed opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army).

The demonstrations between 11-14 September 1995 were the largest street protests to have taken place in Sudan since the military government seized power on 30 June 1989. In the course of the demonstrations government supporters, some reportedly armed, attacked demonstrators and police and plainclothes security officials fired live ammunition and tear gas. At least five people are reported to have been killed -- unofficial sources have claimed that as many as 40 people may have died -- and many others wounded. Hundreds of people were arrested. The majority have since been released.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of the eight men named above, who Amnesty International believes are prisoners of conscience, detained on account of their history of non-violent opposition to government policies;
- seeking assurances of their physical safety and guarantees that they are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
 President of the Republic of the Sudan
 People's Palace
 PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: President, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22411 KAID SD
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier Bakri Hassan Saleh
 Minister of the Interior
 People's Palace
 PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Interior Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD
Salutation: Dear Minister

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

COPIES TO:

Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddo
 Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
 Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Obeid Haj Ali
 Chief Justice
 Law Courts
 Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Angelo Beda Bambara

Chairman of the Human Rights Committee of the Transitional National Assembly
(TNA)*
Omdurman, Sudan

* The TNA's Human Rights Committee was created by Sudan's government-appointed Transitional National Assembly in December 1992, apparently to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda. The Committee's Chairman has said that it investigates reports of human rights violations.

and to diplomatic representatives of Sudan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 1 December 1995.