

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal Concern/Fear of Torture

15 July 1992

SUDAN

Peter Cirrilo - former governor, Equatoria province

Nicholas Aboya - commissioner of police, Juba

Alfred Taban - journalist

Amnesty International is concerned about recently received reports of the arrest in Juba, southern Sudan, of Peter Cirrilo, a former governor of Equatoria province during the elected civilian government of Sadiq al-Mahdi (1986-1989), Nicholas Aboya, the commissioner of police in Juba, and Alfred Taban, a radio journalist, in what appears to be a renewed crackdown on suspected southern Sudanese opponents of the government based in Khartoum.

Peter Cirrilo, a retired general in his mid-fifties, and Nicholas Aboya, a brigadier, were reportedly arrested in mid-June 1992 after an apparent uprising in the government military garrison in Juba prior to an attack by forces of the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA). It is alleged that they may have known of the impending uprising but failed to warn the authorities. Both have since been transferred to Khartoum, but their exact whereabouts are unknown. There is concern that they could be tortured or ill-treated as has been the pattern for many of those arrested by the current government and held incommunicado in "ghost houses". Peter Cirillo had himself been previously arrested and reportedly severely tortured in 1990 (see UA 502/90 (AFR 54/44/90) of 14 December 1990) under similar conditions of detention.

Alfred Taban, a journalist in his mid-thirties, was reported to have been arrested in early June 1992, allegedly for expressing views contrary to those held by the government on the issue of self-determination for people in southern Sudan. Amnesty International concluded he was a prisoner of conscience when he was previously arrested and detained in similar circumstances in 1990 (see UA 156/90 (AFR 54/18/90) of 23 April 1990). It is not known where he is held or whether any charges are contemplated against him. However, Amnesty International is concerned that he too faces risk of torture and other ill-treatment while in unacknowledged and incommunicado detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Torture and ill-treatment are routine in "ghost houses" and at the headquarters of Sudan's security services in Khartoum. Over 75 civilians, former and serving army officers arrested in late August 1991 in connection with an alleged coup attempt were reportedly tortured in "ghost houses". An elderly prisoner was bound and suspended by his wrists from the walls of his cell on three consecutive nights. A civilian prisoner is reported to have had the flesh from his heels sliced off. There have been reports of prisoners being whipped, of others having their testicles crushed with pliers and of yet others being burnt by

hot irons.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the arrests of Peter Cirrilo, Nicholas Aboya, and Alfred Taban whom Amnesty International believes may be prisoners of conscience;
- expressing concern at their continuing incommunicado detention without charge or trial and fear that they may be being tortured;
- seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated, and urging that their whereabouts in custody be made public and that they have immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and any necessary medical attention;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General
Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the NSRCC
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD

2) Brigadier-General al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior and Deputy Chairman of the NSRCC
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

Telegrams: Brig-Gen al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD

3) Mr Abdullah Idris
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Dear Minister

Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

COPIES TO:

- Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi
Chief Justice

Law Courts
Khartoum, Sudan

- Mr Ali Sahloul
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO BOX 873
Khartoum, Sudan

and to diplomatic representatives of Sudan accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,
or your section office, if sending appeals after 26 August 1992.