

URGENT ACTION

JOURNALISTS ON TRIAL, RISK OF DEATH PENALTY

Four journalists from a Sudanese newspaper affiliated to the opposition party are currently facing trial. If they are found guilty, they could be sentenced to death.

Abuzar Al Amin, editor in chief, **Ashraf Abdelaziz**, deputy editor, **Al Tahir Abu Jawhara**, head of the news desk, and **Ramadan Mahjoub**, editor, of *Rai Al Shaab* newspaper are currently standing trial for charges including undermining the constitutional system, terrorism and espionage against the state. Some of these charges are punishable by death in Sudan.

On 16 June, the lawyers for the four men withdrew from the case, with their clients consent, in protest against the prosecution and judges' refusal to accept four of the witnesses that the defence team had brought forward.

A new defence team was formed; the sessions resumed at the end of June and are still ongoing.

Abuzar Al Amin and Ashraf Abdelaziz were arrested on 15 May, Al Tahir Abu Jawhara was arrested on 16 May and Ramadan Mahjoub was arrested on 27 May. Amnesty International has received reports that Abuzar Al Amin and Al Tahir Abu were tortured following their arrest.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Call on the authorities to immediately and unconditionally release the imprisoned journalists, who are detained solely for peacefully exercising their right to freedom of expression.
- Call on the authorities to open an independent and impartial investigation into all allegations of torture and bring the perpetrators to justice.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 13 AUGUST 2010 TO:

President of Sudan
Omar Al Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum
SUDAN
Fax: +249 183 774 339
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice of Sudan
Mohamed Bushara Dousa
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302
Khartoum
Sudan
Fax: +249 183 770 883
SUDAN
Email: moj@moj.gov.sd
Salutation: Dear Minister

And copies to:
Rapporteur of the Advisory Council
Dr Abdelmoneim Osman Mohamed
Taha
Advisory Council on Human Rights
PO Box 302
Khartoum
SUDAN

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the 3rd update of UA 119/10. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR54/017/2010/en and www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR54/019/2010/en

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

JOURNALISTS ON TRIAL, RISK OF DEATH PENALTY

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Between 15 and 27 May, six staff members of Rai Al Shaab newspaper were arrested. When staff arrived for work on 16 May, the Rai Al Shaab office was closed and guarded by NISS agents. Amnesty International considers the staff arrested to be prisoners of conscience, held for expressing their beliefs. Abu Baker Al Sammani, the newspaper's printer was reportedly released a few days after his arrest. Nagi Dahab, the newspaper's administrator was released on 2 June.

The arrest of the *Rai Al Shaab* staff immediately followed the arrest of Hassan Al Turabi, leader of the opposition Popular Congress Party, Hassan Al Turabi, was released without charge on 30 June.

The closure of *Rai Al Shaab* was followed by a resurgence of censorship by National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). This includes pre-print censorship, where NISS agents visit newspapers and remove articles considered sensitive or threatening to the state or where agents visit printing houses and prevent papers from going to print. The NISS also performs 'remote control' censorship, where NISS agents inform editors of banned subjects and expect them not to print articles on these issues. Several papers have been prevented from going to press as a result, including *Al Midan* and *Ajras Al Hurriya*.

Further information on UA: 119/10 Index: AFR 54/023/2010 Issue Date: 02 July 2010

