

PUBLIC

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Fear for Safety

SUDAN

Brigadier General Kemaledin (m)

Lieutenant Colonel Ihab (m)

Lieutenant Colonel Mahdi Hamed (m)

Lieutenant Abdel Moneim Mohammed Zein (m)

The four Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) officers named above have been held in Darfur by the armed opposition group Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) for several months. They are said to be suffering severe ill-treatment and their lives are in danger.

All were captured in Darfur, Lieutenant Colonel Mahdi Hamed and Lieutenant Abdel Moneim Mohammed Zein in West Darfur in the area of Siniya in December 2007, Brigadier General Kemaledin and Lieutenant Colonel Ihab in Haskanita area in South Darfur earlier that year.

Three other men held with them, from JEM Collective Leadership, a group which split from JEM, managed to escape on 7 February after four months in captivity. They reported that all seven had been chained hand and foot, fed only once a day and given very little water. They could not contact their families, who did not even know if they were alive, and were told they would be killed. During JEM attacks, all seven were put in a truck which drove ahead of the attacking force, so that those inside were at particular risk of being blown up by mines or shot in crossfire. One of the men who escaped said that he feared that the four SAF detainees might be unlawfully killed.

Using captured combatants in this way violates Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which states that: "Persons taking no active part in the hostilities, including members of armed forces who have laid down their arms and those placed *hors de combat* by sickness, wounds, detention, or any other cause, shall in all circumstances be treated humanely." Article 3(a) prohibits "violence to life and person, in particular murder of all kinds, mutilation, cruel treatment and torture." Cruel treatment and torture of captured combatants is a war crime.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The SLA and JEM took up arms against the government of Sudan in 2003 to protest against the perceived marginalisation of Darfur. The government armed and supported local militia, known as the Janjawid, as a proxy force against the armed opposition groups. Instead of targeting combatants, the Sudanese government and the Janjawid deliberately targeted civilians of the same ethnicity as the armed groups. Some 95,000 people have been killed, and more than 200,000 may have died as a result of conflict-related hunger or disease. More than two million people have been forced to flee their homes. Armed opposition groups have also committed human rights abuses, including targeting humanitarian convoys and workers. Amnesty International and the UN have called the attacks committed in Darfur crimes against humanity and war crimes.

After the failure of a Darfur Peace Agreement, signed by only one faction of the SLA, the SLA and JEM splintered into a number of armed factions. A joint UN and African Union peacekeeping force, UNAMID, is now in Darfur and most armed groups are now maintaining a ceasefire. However, the main branch of JEM, led

by Khalil Ibrahim, launched a series of attacks against areas in West Darfur north of the state capital, Jeneina, capturing territory, which resulted in counter attacks by the Sudan Armed Forces in the past few weeks. These clashes have left more than a hundred civilians dead, and several thousand more displaced.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing concern that JEM are subjecting the four SAF officers (naming them) to cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment;
- calling on Dr Khalil Ibrahim to ensure that JEM abide by international humanitarian law and treat anyone they capture, from SAF or other armed groups, humanely, and reminding him that cruel treatment and torture of captured combatants is a war crime;
- urging him to ensure that those who ordered or carried out humiliating or degrading treatment of detainees are immediately removed from their positions

APPEALS TO:

Dr Khalil Ibrahim
Chairman of the Justice and Equality Movement

Salutation: Dear Dr Khalil Ibrahim
Email: sudanjem@hotmail.com

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 10 April 2008.