

PUBLIC

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UA 91/07 Fear of torture or ill-treatment/ Incommunicado detention

SUDAN Osman Al Magdum (m), 71 years old, Deputy Head of the Manasir Association Executive Committee (MAEC)
Abdel Rahman Zaidan (m), Deputy Head of the MAEC
Abdel Aatti Abdel Khair (m), member of the MAEC
Hassan Sidiq Atolabi (m), Member of the MAEC
Haitham Aldusogi (m), Member of the MAEC
Ahmed Abdel Fatah Gabriel (m)

The men named above, most of whom are members of the Manasir Association Executive Committee, are reportedly being held incommunicado without charge in Kober prison in the capital, Khartoum. They are at risk of torture and ill-treatment.

On 29 March the men named above were arrested at their homes in Khartoum by plain clothed national security officers. Torture or ill-treatment of people arrested by the police or the national security forces is often reported in Sudan, particularly when those detained are not given access to the outside world.

Emergency laws have allowed the Sudanese security forces to detain people indefinitely, without charge or trial. Article 31 of the 1999 National Security Forces Act, which allows the security forces to detain people for up to nine months without access to judicial review, is still in place.

The Manasir Association was formed by members of the Manasir ethnic community to campaign on behalf of community members threatened with displacement during and after construction of the Merowe High Dam in northern Sudan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In 2004 the government of Sudan began the construction of the Merowe High Dam, also known as Hamadab Dam, in northern Sudan, about 350 km north of the capital Khartoum. The Merowe High Dam is one of the largest hydropower projects in Africa.

However, local populations were not consulted regarding the planning process and the impact it will have on their communities. There has been much protest and condemnation of the project, including loss of land for the local population, environmental damage to the area and destruction of archaeological sites. The project has led to the relocation, in some cases forcibly, and displacement of local communities. When the project is completed in 2008, more than 50,000 people will have been relocated or displaced from their homes and lands.

Since 2004 a number of community leaders have been subjected to harassment, arbitrary arrest and detention. On 22 April 2006, local government authorities clashed with members of the Amri ethnic group in one village. At least two people were reportedly killed and several were injured in the clashes. On 16 August 2006, Naser Eldin Ahmed Al Tayeb, a journalist working for the Al Ayam Arabic daily newspaper, was arrested and beaten whilst reporting on the plight of thousands of people who have been displaced by floods in the area around the dam.

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

- expressing concern for the six men named above, who are detained incommunicado in Kober prison in Khartoum;
- urging the authorities to give the detainees immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers, and any necessary medical treatment;
- calling for guarantees that the men are being treated humanely in detention, and not tortured or ill-treated;
- urging the authorities to charge the men with recognizable criminal offences, or else release them immediately;
- urging the authorities to repeal Article 31 of the National Security Forces Act, which allows detainees to be held for up to nine months without access to judicial review.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Ali Mohammed Ali al-Mardi
Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302
Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: +249 183 770883

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Abdel Halim Mut'afi
Governor of Khartoum State
Khartoum State, Sudan

Fax: + 249 183 770143

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Dr Abdel Moneim Osman Taha
Rapporteur, Advisory Council for Human Rights, Khartoum, Sudan

Email: human_rights_sudan@hotmail.com

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 29 May 2007.