

PUBLIC

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Fear for safety/ "Disappearance"/Medical concern

20 August 2004

SUDAN

Abdallah Bashir (m) aged 23

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of Abdallah Bashir who may have "disappeared". He has not been seen since his arrest by the National Security Forces on 31 July in Kalma camp, near Nyala in South Darfur state. He may be detained incommunicado in the military hospital in Nyala, after allegedly being tortured. Alternatively, he may have been transferred to the capital Khartoum.

Abdallah Bashir was arrested along with 21 other men by members of the National Security Forces. They were detained for one day in the National Security Office and then transferred to the Nyala Prison. The men report being beaten all over their bodies with sticks. They were arrested at a camp for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kalma, 17 km south of Nyala. They were reportedly protesting at government attempts to return them to the villages from which they were forcibly displaced.

On 2 August, the IDPs were charged with public order offences, under Article 69 of the Sudan Penal Code and presented to a court. Abdallah Bashir was not present, apparently because he was in hospital as a result of being tortured. However, his lawyers have searched every hospital in Nyala but have been unable to find him. He was also not presented to a subsequent court session on 7 August.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Sudanese government has given free rein to the nomad militia known as the *Janjawid* to attack farming villages, kill, rape and abduct the inhabitants and drive them out of the villages, burning homes and looting property, crops and cattle.

More than one million people have fled rural areas and taken refuge in settlements around towns in Darfur. More than 30,000 people have been killed, thousands of women have been raped, and at least 170,000 people are now living as refugees on the Chad border or inside Chad. The people in the camps in Darfur still face serious human rights violations by government forces and the *Janjawid* militia, including armed attacks and rape.

The Sudanese government announced in July 2004 that it was planning to return several thousand people to their villages, although in a joint statement with the UN issued on 3 July 2003 they had undertaken to "ensure... that any return of the displaced to their homes is done in a truly voluntary manner." The government may now intimidate people to return to their villages so as to ease the international scrutiny of its actions in Darfur, even though rural areas remain insecure and people have no homes or possessions to return to. Several IDPs were arrested for opposing attempts by the authorities to return them to their villages.

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

- urging the authorities to immediately reveal the whereabouts of Abdallah Bashir, and give him immediate access to relatives and lawyers;
- expressing concern at the reported torture of Abdallah Bashir and 21 other Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and call on the authorities to urgently provide them with any necessary medical care;
- calling on the authorities to immediately suspend from duty any member of the security forces suspected of having committed acts of torture, pending the results of a full, independent and impartial investigation into such reports;

APPEALS TO: (It may be difficult to get through to these numbers but please keep trying)

Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
President

President's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249183 779977 (There may be a recorded message followed by a fax tone)
Salutation: Your Excellency

Major General Abdel Rahim Mohammed Hussein
Minister of Internal Affairs
and Presidential Representative for Darfur
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : +249 183 773046
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 11 771479
Salutation: Dear Minister

Lieutenant-General Adam Hamid Musa
Governor of South Darfur State
c/o People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 11 771 024
Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Mr Yasir Sid-Ahmed
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: +249 183 770883
Salutation: Dear Mr Sid Ahmed

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 October 2004.