

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED RELIGIOUS LEADER DENIED FAMILY VISITS

Matar Younis Ali Hussein, a visually impaired religious teacher, has been transferred from Kober Prison to a detention centre run by the State Security Prosecution office of Crimes Against the State. The Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) arrested him on 1 April and since then he has been denied access to his family and a lawyer. Matar Younis has been a vocal critic of the government's policy in Darfur. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment while in detention.

Amnesty International has received information that at the end of May, **Matar Younis Ali Hussein**, was transferred from Kober Prison to a detention centre run by the State Security Prosecution Office of Crimes Against the State.

Matar Younis is a 48-year-old, visually impaired religious teacher at the Mosque of Zalingei and a father of eight children. The NISS arrested him on 1 April in Zalengi city, Central Darfur; he was taken to Khartoum few days later where he was detained until his transfer. He has not been allowed access to a lawyer or family visits since his arrest. He has not been charged with any crime.

Matar Younis has been a vocal critic of the government's policy in Darfur and has called for the protection of displaced people. In February 2018, Matar Younis Ali Hussein criticized the government policy of recruiting over 4,000 people and distributing weapons and vehicles. He considers the mobilization and allocation of firearms in contradiction with the aim of peace claimed by the government. Also, he describes the peace process in Darfur as false peace.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Calling on the Sudanese authorities to release Matar Younis Ali Hussein immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Calling on them to ensure that, pending his release, Matar Younis Ali Hussein is granted regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choice;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending his release, he is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Calling on them to release all detainees from Darfur who are being held solely as a result of the peaceful exercise of their human rights.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 24 JULY 2018 TO:

President

HE Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister for Justice

Mohamed Ahmed Salim
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302
Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

:

And copies to

Minister for Interior

Ibrahim Mahmoud Hamid
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 70/18. Further information:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr54/8232/2018/en/>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As of today, [according to the UN](#), the overall security situation in Darfur is still volatile due to the growing number of pro-government and other armed groups in the region in addition to the lack of tangible progress in the peace process to address the causes and consequences of the conflict. There are widespread incidents of killings against internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other civilians, abduction, looting, rape and arbitrary arrests.

Despite this credible information on the human rights situation, the government of Sudan continues to repeat its claims that the security situation in Darfur has improved and is “stable”. From November 2017 to March 2018, large displacement was caused by the internal fighting within the Sudan Liberation Army – Abdel Wahid (SLA-AW) in East Jebel Marra and between SLA-AW and Government of Sudan forces.

Torture and other forms of ill-treatment, arbitrary arrest and detention, remain pervasive in Darfur. It is a repressive measure regularly used by the Sudanese authorities to silence and punish dissent and anti-government political activists, human rights defenders, civil society activists and IDPs in Darfur. The rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are heavily restricted in Darfur.

The NISS maintains broad powers of arrest and detention under the National Security Act 2010 (NSA), which allows suspects to be detained for up to four-and-a-half months without judicial review. NISS officials often use these powers to arbitrarily arrest and detain individuals, many of whom are then subjected to torture and other ill-treatment. Under the same Act, NISS agents are provided with protection from prosecution for any act committed in the course of their work, which has resulted in a pervasive culture of abuse and impunity. The constitutional amendment to Article 151 (NSA) passed on 5 January 2015 which expanded the mandate of the NISS has exacerbated the situation. The amendment transformed the NISS from an intelligence agency focused on information gathering, analysis and advice, to a fully-fledged security agency with a broad mandate to exercise a mix of functions usually carried out by the armed forces or law enforcement agencies. It gave the NISS unlimited discretion to decide what constitutes a political, economic or social threat and how to respond to such threats. Neither the NSA nor the revised Article 151 explicitly or implicitly require the NISS to abide by relevant international, regional and domestic law in the operation of its duties.

Name: Matar Younis Ali Hussein
Gender m/f: m

Further information on UA: 70/18 Index: AFR 54/8568/2018 Issue Date: 12 June 2018