

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Fear of Torture

11 February 1992

SUDAN

**Col. Mustafa al-Tay
and at least 40 army and airforce officers**

Colonel Mustafa al-Tay and at least 40 officers serving in the army and airforce were arrested in Khartoum and Omdurman on 2 February 1992 after the authorities uncovered an alleged plot to overthrow the government. It is believed that those arrested are being held in secret detention centres in Khartoum, known as "ghost houses" in Sudan, which are run by the "Security of the Revolution", a security service formed after the 30 June 1989 military coup which brought the current government to power.

There is serious concern that Colonel Mustafa al-Tay and the others are at risk of torture, which is routine in "ghost houses" and the headquarters of the security services. Over 80 civilians and former and serving army officers arrested in late August 1991 in connection with another alleged coup attempt were reportedly seriously tortured while under detention in "ghost houses". Prisoners were bound and suspended by their wrists from the walls of their cells for at least three consecutive nights. A civilian prisoner is reported to have had the flesh from his heels sliced off. There are reports of prisoners being whipped, of others having their testicles crushed with pliers and of yet others being burnt by hot irons.

Amnesty International has been able to confirm the torture in detention centres of more than 100 other people arrested since November 1989 by members of "the Security of the Revolution". One of their victims, Ali Fadul, a medical doctor, is reported to have died as a result of torture on 22 April 1990 (see UA AFR 54/22/90).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 30 June 1989 the authorities claim to have thwarted several coup attempts. Twenty five army officers arrested in March 1990 were sentenced to terms of imprisonment in summary military trials in May 1990. Eighteen remain in prison - seven escaped in late 1991. On 23 April 1990, 28 officers were arrested for taking part in an alleged coup attempt. They were executed after summary hearings on 24 April 1991. At least 41 civilians and soldiers were arrested in September 1990 - again the authorities announced that they had foiled an attempted coup plot. All remain in prison. Of the over 80 people arrested in August 1991, 46 were sentenced to terms of prison terms. Eleven were originally sentenced to death, but this was commuted to life imprisonment.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported arrest of Colonel Mustafa al-Tay and the others who are reportedly held incommunicado in secret detention centres without charge or trial;
- express concern that they are at risk of torture;
- requesting information about where they are being held and what steps are being taken to ensure that they have immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and any necessary medical attention;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

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APPEALS TO:

His Excellency Lieutenant General
Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the NSRCC
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD
Salutation: Your Excellency

Brigadier-General al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior
and Deputy Chairman of the NSRCC
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Brig-Gen al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD
Salutation: Dear Brigadier-General

Brigadier Ahmad Mahmoud Hassan
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum
Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Dear Brigadier

COPIES TO:

Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi
Chief Justice, Law Courts, Khartoum.

Mr Ali Sahloul,
Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs,
PO BOX 873, Khartoum.

and to diplomatic representatives of Sudan in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat,

or your section office, if sending appeals after 25 March 1992.