

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 95/94 Fear of Torture / Legal Concern

10 March 1994

SUDAN:Abdel-Mahmud Abbo - leading member of the Ansar religious order

and also:Abdel-Rahman al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, former army officer and son
of former Prime Minister al-Sadiq al-Mahdi
Abdel-Rahman Farah, former Head of Security
Dr Ibrahim el-Amin, former government minister
Abdel-Mahmud Haj Salih, former Attorney General

Sarah Nugdallah, (f), lecturer at Omdurman University and Chairperson of Women's
Committee of Umma Party

Amnesty International is concerned at reports of the arrests in late February and early March 1994 of Abdel-Mahmud Abbo and of five members of the banned opposition Umma Party. The arrests followed a speech, critical of the government, given by Abdel-Mahmud Abbo at Wad Nubawi mosque in Omdurman to celebrate the 17th day of Ramadan, the holy month.

Abdel-Mahmud Abbo, a leading member of the Ansar religious order, which is closely linked to the Umma Party, was arrested on 27 February. His whereabouts remain unknown and there is grave concern that he may be at risk of torture.

The next morning, four Umma party members who attended the speech, **Abdel-Rahman Sadiq al-Mahdi, Abdel-Rahman Farah, Ibrahim el-Amin and Abdel-Mahmud Haj-Salih**, were arrested and detained for several hours. **Sarah Nugdallah**, also a senior member of the Umma party, was arrested on 7 March and briefly detained. All five have been ordered to report early each morning to the security headquarters in Khartoum, where they are held until late at night and then allowed to return home. Amnesty International believes that the five are prisoners of conscience arrested for exercising their internationally recognised rights to freedom of expression and association.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Ansar sect is a traditional order in Sudanese Islam and has its origins in the followers of Mohamed Ahmad al-Mahdi, the great-grandfather of Sadiq al-Mahdi, Sudan's former Prime Minister and leader of the Umma Party.

Making individuals report each day and holding them until the evening is a form of physical restriction tantamount to detention. The practice prevents individuals from leading their normal life and effectively removes them from society. Day-time detention is now widely used in Khartoum to punish suspected opponents of the government and restrict their freedom of movement. Those summoned are not given food or drink and are sometimes interrogated during the day. Individuals have been made to report daily in this manner for periods ranging from a few days to several months.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters either in English or Arabic, or in your own language:

- expressing concern at the detention without charge or trial of Abdel-Mahmud Abbo following his arrest on 27 February 1994;
- requesting assurances that he is not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment and that his whereabouts in custody be made public and that he

is granted immediate and regular access to his family, legal counsel and any necessary medical attention;

- urging that he be released unless he is to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

- expressing concern at the arrest of Abdel-Rahman al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, Abdel-Rahman Farah, Dr Ibrahim el-Amin, Abdel-Mahmud Haj Salih on 28 February 1994, and of Sarah Nugdallah on 7 March 1994 who Amnesty International believes are prisoners of conscience arrested for exercising their internationally recognized and fundamental rights to freedom of expression and association;

- expressing concern that they are reported to have been ordered to report each day to the security headquarters in Khartoum where they are made to remain until the evening;

- indicating that Amnesty International regards this form of physical restriction as tantamount to detention and calls for the five, as prisoners of conscience, to be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
President of the Republic of the Sudan
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

2) Brigadier-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Husayn
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Brig-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammed Husayn, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD
Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

3) Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

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

Mr Hussein Suleiman Abu Salih
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873, Khartoum, Sudan

Dr A. al-Mufti
Secretary of Human Rights Commission*, Khartoum, Sudan

* The Human Rights Commission is a government-backed body, nominally independent, but apparently created to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda.

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 21 April 1994.