

PUBLIC

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Possible prisoners of conscience  
Fear of torture and ill-treatment

11 September 1998

SUDAN

Father Lino Sebit, catholic priest at the Archdiocese of  
Khartoum

Father Hillary Boma, catholic priest, chancellor of the  
Archdiocese of Khartoum

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Amnesty International is deeply concerned that the two above-named priests are at risk of ongoing torture and ill-treatment while in detention. This follows recent reports that both have confessed, under duress, to being involved in the bombings in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, on 30 June 1998. There are further fears that this could lead to an unfair conviction.

Father Lino Sebit, who was arrested on 29 July 1998 and taken to Khartoum North Police investigation Bureau, was initially believed to have been arrested for his alleged involvement in a murder. The charge was subsequently changed, however, to involvement in the bombings. It is reported that he was tortured and ill-treated in order to force him to confess to this.

Father Hillary Boma, who was arrested at gunpoint at St Matthew's Catholic Cathedral in Khartoum on 1 August, is reported to have confessed to involvement in the bombings in order to prevent Father Lino Sebit from being further tortured and ill-treated. He is an outspoken critic of the Sudanese government.

It is not known where the two priests are currently being held, and Father Lino Sebit has not been seen since his arrest.

The organisation believes that the two priests may be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of views critical of the Sudan government.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The nine bomb explosions in Khartoum on 30 June coincided with the signing of a new constitution by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, and the subsequent announcement by leading members of banned opposition parties of their intention to reestablish their parties in accordance with the new constitution. Later that day at least 30 people were arrested for questioning about the announcement. All but one were released within 24 hours.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Father Lino Sebit, on 29 July 1998 and Father Hillary Boma, on 1 August, who may be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned solely for the peaceful expression of views critical of the Sudan Government;
- expressing concern at reports that Father Lino Sebit has been ill-treated whilst in detention and seeking assurances that the two detainees will not be subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that their place of detention be made known and that they be given immediate and regular access to their families, legal representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- seeking assurances that they will receive a fair and prompt trial in accordance with recognized international standards, and quoting Article 10 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: " Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the

determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him".

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir  
President of the Republic of the Sudan  
People's Palace  
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan  
**Telegrams: President Lt Gen Omar al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Ministry of Justice  
Khartoum, Sudan  
**Telegrams: Minister Justice, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Telexes: c/o 22411 KAID SD / 22604 IPOL SD (please request they be forwarded to the Minister)**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
PO Box 873  
Khartoum, Sudan  
**Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr Obeid Haj Ali  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court  
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Ahmad al-Mufti  
Secretary  
Advisory Council for Human Rights  
PO Box 302  
Khartoum, Sudan

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 October 1998.

**"Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him"**

Article 10, Universal Declaration of Human Rights