

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR
54/06/00

UA 188/00

Fear of Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment/ Possible prisoners of conscience/ Human rights defenders at risk

29 June 2000

SUDAN

Mirghani Mahmoud al-Noman

Students, including:

Salah Houli, Abu Shaiba, Khieder Osman Khieder, Mohamed Hassan Badri, Own Christopher, Mohamed Suliman Mahmoud, Nizar Mohamed Awad, Khalid Hassan, Omer Mohamed Toam, Alobied Hassan, Tarig Awad, Alaa Eldeen Ahmed Osman, Medani Medani Mohamed, Nabil Kamal Yousif, Tagy Eldeen Ahmed Mohamed Taha, Omer Sid Ahmed, Ali Dafalla

Amnesty International is concerned for the safety of scores of students arrested by the Sudanese army and security forces in various incidents following a seminar at the University of Sennar on 18 June 2000. Amnesty International fears that those detained could be subjected to torture.

On 18 June, uniformed soldiers opened fire on people at the seminar, 'The Current Crisis in Sudan and the Future Prospects', killing student 'Mirghani Mahmoud Al-Norman. Several students were injured including Salah Houli and Abu Shaiba. Policemen were also caught in the cross-fire. A number of students were arrested during subsequent clashes with the security forces and are to be charged. Speakers invited to the seminar, including human rights defender Ghazi Suleiman, went into hiding and then escaped.

On 20 June, hundreds demonstrated in support of the Sennar students at the University of El Nilein and the Sudan University for Science and Technology in central Khartoum, and were dispersed with teargas by police.

Four days later, student Khieder Osman Khieder was arrested by Sennar city security forces and detained in a secret location. He has not been seen since.

On 25 June, security forces arrested, detained and reportedly tortured the following students: Mohamed Hassan Badri, Own Christopher, Mohamed Suliman Mahmoud, Tarig Awad, Alaa Eldeen Ahmed Osman, Medani Medani Mohamed, Nizar Mohamed Awad, a driver and Khalid Hassan. Alobied Hassan, a military recruit and Omer Mohamed Toam were also arrested, detained and tortured. Most of the men have been hospitalised but are still being tried. They were charged under Articles 68 (Riots) and 69 (Disturbance of public tranquillity) of the 1991 criminal law.

Security and police forces arrested the following students at Omdurman city on 27 June: Nabil Kamal Yousif, Tagy Eldeen Ahmed Mohamed Taha, Omer Sid Ahmed and Ali Dafalla. On 28 June, students studying at Juba University in Khartoum were attacked with sticks and tear gas by the security and police forces. One hundred and twenty nine students are reported to have been arrested and tortured.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Harassment and arrests of students and human rights defenders has been a recurrent pattern in the last few months in Sudan, mainly around the capital Khartoum. Ghazi Suleiman, founder of the Sudanese Human Rights Group and leader of the Democratic Forces Front, was arrested several times this year for his outspoken criticism of the current regime. Student political activities have been prevented or disrupted, leading to harassment and arrests of students.

The seminar organised at the University of Sennar was reportedly advertised as a public meeting in a local newspaper. The Government of Sudan claims that students had not followed legal procedures for obtaining a permit for the seminar.

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

- calling for an immediate and impartial investigation into the death of Mirghani Mahmoud Al-Noman and citizens injured at Sennar University, including Salah Houli and Abu Shaiba;
- asking for those responsible to be brought immediately to justice and to be held accountable for these human rights violations;
- expressing concern about the arrests and reported torture of students following the incident at Sennar University;
- seeking assurances that those detained are being treated humanely in detention and that they are given access to medical care and to lawyers;

- calling for those detained to be given a fair trial in accordance with international standards, and to be either charged with a recognizable criminal offence or released immediately and unconditionally.
- stating that all those arrested solely for the exercise of their right to free expression and assembly would be prisoners of conscience and that they should be released immediately and unconditionally.
- asking the authorities to reveal publicly the whereabouts of student Khieder Osman Khieder, arrested on 24 June in Sennar;
- expressing your concern for human rights defenders in Khartoum and asking the authorities to stop harassing them.

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

Faxes: + 24911 787676 or 783223

Telegrams: President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Faxes: + 24911 774063

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

Faxes: + 24911 779383

Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Hafez al-Sheikh al-Zaki
Chief Justice
Supreme Court
Khartoum, Sudan

Dr Ahmad al-Mufti
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 11 August 2000.