

# URGENT ACTION

## 57 FREED IN SUDAN, MORE STILL ON DEATH ROW

**On 24 February, 57 alleged members of Sudanese armed opposition group, the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM), some of whom had been sentenced to death, were released from prison in Sudan's capital, Khartoum, as part of a ceasefire agreement. Many more of those sentenced to death by special counter-terrorism courts remain on death row.**

Following an attack on Sudan's capital Khartoum by the JEM in May 2008, the Sudanese government arrested hundreds of people for their alleged involvement. Special counter-terrorism courts have sentenced 106 of these individuals to death. All those convicted have been held in Kober prison in Khartoum. One man who had been among those sentenced died of tuberculosis in prison in 2009.

Those sentenced to death, all men, were found guilty of crimes such as membership of a terrorist organisation (allegedly the JEM) and waging war against the state. The men's trials were unfair; most were tortured and otherwise ill-treated, many had their confessions extracted under torture and many of the accused did not have access to a lawyer until the trial began.

As part of a ceasefire agreement signed on 24 February by the JEM and the Sudanese government, the President of Sudan agreed to cancel the death sentences of all JEM members and release all prisoners. Later the same day, 57 prisoners were released. Further alleged JEM members who have been sentenced to death continue to be held in Kober prison. According to the terms of the ceasefire agreement, they should be eligible for release, although it is not known when this will happen.

### **PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:**

- Calling on the authorities to ensure that none of the remaining men convicted by counter-terror courts for their involvement in the May 2008 attack on Khartoum by the Justice and Equality Movement are executed;
- Expressing concern that their convictions resulted from unfair trials and in many cases were based on confessions extracted under torture;
- Calling for the remaining detainees to be given a fair retrial in accordance with international standards and without recourse to the death penalty;
- Calling on the authorities to investigate the allegations that these men were tortured, and ensure that those responsible are prosecuted in fair trials without recourse to the death penalty.

### **PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 08 APRIL 2010 TO:**

H.E. President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir  
Office of the President  
People's Palace  
PO Box 281  
Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax: +249 183 774 339

Abdel Baset Saleh Sabderat  
Minister of Justice  
Ministry of Justice  
PO Box 302  
Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax: +249 183 770 883

**Salutation: Dear Minister**

### **And copies to:**

Dr Priscilla Joseph  
Chair of the Human Rights Committee  
National Assembly  
Omdurman  
Sudan

**Fax: +249 187 560 950**

**Salutation: Your Excellency**

**Also send copies to diplomatic representatives of Sudan accredited to your country.** Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the third update of UA 108/09 (AFR54/012/2009). Further information: [www.amnesty.org/library/info/AFR54/012/2009/en](http://www.amnesty.org/library/info/AFR54/012/2009/en) and [www.amnesty.org/library/info/AFR54/017/2009/en](http://www.amnesty.org/library/info/AFR54/017/2009/en) and [www.amnesty.org/library/info/AFR54/003/2010/en](http://www.amnesty.org/library/info/AFR54/003/2010/en)

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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The JEM's May 2008 attack on Khartoum was stopped by Sudanese forces in a matter of hours. More than 200 people were killed in the clashes. Over the weeks that followed the attack, the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) arbitrarily arrested close to one thousand civilians mainly from Darfur that were living in Khartoum, mainly on the basis of their origin and ethnic group. In the three months following the attack, Amnesty International received reports of extrajudicial executions, arbitrary arrests, incommunicado detentions, and widespread torture and other ill-treatment in NISS detention centres. The special counter-terror courts were established on 29 May 2008 to try those who allegedly took part in the attack. Since the 2008 arrests, around 200 individuals remain unaccounted for.

Further information on UA: 108/09 Index: AFR 54/006/2010 Issue Date: 25 February 2010

