

Further Information on UA 264/06 (AFR 54/057/2006, 02 October 2006) – Fear for safety/ fear of torture New concern: Health concern

**SUDAN**            **Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim (m), aged 52, Sudan Liberation Movement representative**  
**Zakaria Ahmed Abulgasim (m), his brother**

**New name:      Mukhtar Ali Ahmed (m)**

Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim, his brother Zakaria, and a third man, Mukhtar Ali Ahmed, are now known to be held in Kober Prison, in the capital, Khartoum. They have access to a lawyer, but have been denied all contact with their families. Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim, who is diabetic, has asked for medical attention, but has been refused. None of the men has been charged with any offence.

In protest at their illegal detention all three began a hunger strike. Around 2 March, the Attorney General visited the three and promised to free them shortly. The hunger strike was halted, but all three are still being held, despite the Attorney General's pledge.

Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim is a member of the political wing of the Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM), one of the armed opposition groups fighting the government in Darfur. He had been living with his wife and two children in Saudi Arabia. On 28 September, after having been arrested by Saudi security forces, he was flown to the Sudanese capital, Khartoum, by a private Saudi Arabian chartered aircraft. He was taken blindfolded to the head office of Sudanese National Security and then later to Kober prison, in Khartoum. Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim had been resident in Saudi Arabia working as a businessman and lived there with his wife. His brother had been arrested in Khartoum on 24 September.

Once in Sudan, Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim was told that he was being held in connection with the murder of Mohammed Taha, editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Al-Wifaq*. Mohammed Taha had been decapitated on 6 September, apparently by Islamists who took issue with an article he had written concerning the lineage of the Prophet Mohammed. Government sources believed that Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim might have been involved in the murder because of another article written by Mohammed Taha, which was seen as disparaging ethnic Fur women (Abulgasim is half Fur). The trial for Taha's murder began on 28 February 2007, and neither of the Abulgasim brothers, nor Mukhtar Ali Ahmed, has been formally charged.

Mukhtar Ali Ahmed, an employee of the *Bank al Islami al Sudani*, the Sudan Islamic Bank, was also arrested in Khartoum on 10 October. Though not formally charged, he was told his arrest was linked to the murder of Mohammed Taha. Mukhtar Ali Ahmed is also an outspoken critic of Sudanese government policy towards Darfur and an acquaintance of Zakaria Ahmed Abulgasim.

All three are originally from the Kuttum area of North Darfur; and are from ethnic groups associated with the Darfuri armed opposition groups. It is believed they were targeted for their role in coordinating financial support to, or directly financially supporting, the SLM.

Abulgasim Ahmed Abulgasim was the head of the SLA Wealth Sharing Commission at the Darfur peace talks in Abuja, which resulted in a peace agreement between the Sudanese government and only one of the factions of the SLA, the SLA Minni Minawi. The Sudanese government has labelled the people who did not sign the peace agreement "terrorists".

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Political opponents and members of armed opposition groups in Sudan are often held incommunicado for long periods, and tortured by the security forces. Their trials, when they happen, are most often unfair. The security forces have also detained and tortured relatives of members of armed opposition groups or those sharing the same ethnicity.

The SLA took up arms against the government in February 2003 over complaints of marginalisation and underdevelopment. In the conflict which followed, the Sudanese government and local nomad militias, known as the Janjawid, have killed tens of thousands of civilians, raped thousands of women, destroyed hundreds of villages and forced some two million people to flee their homes.

The Sudanese authorities use prolonged incommunicado detention as a tool of repression to create a climate of fear and to crush political opposition. The National Security Forces Act allows the security forces to "preventively" detain people suspected of "crimes against the State" incommunicado without charge or trial and without access to judicial

review for up to nine months. The concept of "crime against the State" is defined so broadly as to sometimes cover dissident opinions expressed in a non-violent manner. Article 33 allows national security forces immunity from prosecution and maintains the secrecy of any act carried out in the service of the National Security Agency in regular court proceedings. Article 10(i) of the 1993 Law of Evidence allows evidence obtained by torture to be accepted.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:**

- urging the authorities to give the three detainees named above immediate and regular access to their families and independent medical care;
- urging the authorities to try the men for recognisably criminal offences, or else release them;
- urging the authorities to repeal Article 31 of the National Security Forces Act, which allows detainees to be held for up to nine months outside the control of the judiciary.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir  
President of the Republic of Sudan  
President' s Palace  
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

**Fax:** + 249 183 771651  
+ 249 183 787676  
+ 249 183 783223

**Salutation:** Your Excellency

Mr Ali Mohammed Ali al-Mardi  
Minister of Justice, Ministry of Justice, PO Box 302, Khartoum, Sudan

**Fax:** +249 183 770883  
**Salutation:** Dear Minister

Prof. Al-Zubair Bashir Taha  
Minister of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Interior, PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

**Fax:** + 249 183 774339  
+ 249 183 776554 (Please mark, "FAO Minister of Internal Affairs")

**Salutation:** Dear Minister

**COPIES TO:**

Dr Abdel Moneim Osman Taha  
Rapporteur, Advisory Council for Human Rights, Khartoum, Sudan  
**Email:** human\_rights\_sudan@hotmail.com

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 25 April 2007.\*\*\*\*\*