

PUBLIC

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UA 238/04 Fear for safety/Torture or ill-treatment

SUDAN Mohamed Ibrahim Gasi (m), *Fersha* (Masalit leader) of Um Sibeka area
Adam Suleiman (m)
Tijani Gamar (m)
Annur Tambus (m), the shaikh of Durti in Ardamata camp

The four men named above, community leaders from the Masalit ethnic group forced to flee their villages, were arrested on 17 July by members of the National Security and Intelligence Agency in Ardamata camp, where they are living. The camp is on the outskirts of the capital of West Darfur state, Al-Jeneina. They are detained in the offices of the security forces in Al-Jeneina and have reportedly been tortured. They have not been allowed any medical attention, or access to their families and lawyers.

They were reportedly arrested on suspicion of encouraging other people now living in the camp not to go back to their villages and of passing on information to "foreigners". However, they do not appear to have been charged with any offence.

Thousands of people forced to flee rural villages in West Darfur have taken refuge in Ardamata, and tens of thousands have gathered around Al-Jeneina since February 2003. The Sudanese government announced in July 2004 that it was planning to return several thousand people to their villages, although in a joint statement with the UN issued on 3 July 2003 they had undertaken to "ensure... that any return of the displaced to their homes is done in a truly voluntary manner."

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Sudanese government has given free rein to the nomad militia known as the *Janjawid* to attack farming villages, kill, rape and abduct the inhabitants and drive them out of the villages, burning or looting homes, property, crops and cattle.

More than one million people have fled rural areas and taken refuge in settlements around towns in Darfur. More than 30,000 people have been killed, thousands of women have been raped, and at least 170,000 people are now living as refugees on the Chad border or inside Chad. The people in the camps in Darfur are among the most vulnerable: they receive less assistance and protection from the international community than the refugees in Chad. They still face serious human rights violations by government forces and the *Janjawid* militia, including armed attacks and rape.

After intense international pressure on the Sudanese government, humanitarian organisations have been allowed better access to the camps. However, foreign delegations and independent journalists visiting the camps appear to be closely monitored by the government security forces. The government may now be forcing people to return to their villages so as to ease the international scrutiny of its actions in Darfur.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of the four men (naming them);
- expressing concern at reports that they have been tortured in the National Security Office in al-Jeneina, and asking the authorities to ensure that they are not tortured again;

- noting that they are being held without charge and incommunicado, in violation of Article 9 of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which Sudan has ratified. This prohibits the arbitrary detention and states that anyone arrested on a criminal charge should be brought promptly before a judicial authority and is entitled to trial within a reasonable time or released;
- calling on the government to allow them immediate access to their families, legal counsel and any medical care they may need.
- urging the authorities to ensure that people now living in camps in Darfur are not forcibly returned to any place where their life, safety or health is at risk

APPEALS TO:

Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
President's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249183 779977
Salutation: Your Excellency

Major General Abdel Rahim Mohammed Hussein
Minister of Internal Affairs
and Presidential Representative for Darfur
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : +249 183 773046
Salutation: Dear Minister

Major General Suleiman Abdulla Adam
Governor of West Darfur
c/o People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 11 771 024
Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Mr Yasir Sid-Ahmed
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: +249 183 770883
Salutation: Dear Mr Sid Ahmed

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 13 September 2004.