

UA 223/95 Possible Prisoners of Conscience / Fear of Torture 19 September 1995

SUDAN Mohamed Abdel Karim, Sudanese Islamic cleric
'Abd al-Fattah Sami Ahmad, Egyptian national
'Abd al-Aziz, Tunisian national
Adam (other names unknown), Algerian national
Issam (other names unknown), Algerian national

Security personnel are reported to have arrested Mohamed Abdel Karim, a political opponent of the Sudan Government, and four foreign nationals, on 1 September 1995 in a night raid on Mohamed Abdel Karim's house in the Khartoum suburb of al-Kalakala. Amnesty International believes that the men, who are reported to be in incommunicado detention without charge or trial, may have been arrested for their non-violent political opposition to the government and are at risk of torture. Their place of detention remains unknown.

Mohamed Abdel Karim, an outspoken proponent of Islamist ideological views who was deported from Saudi Arabia to Sudan in 1993, is a critic of the government of President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir and of its ideological mentor, Hassan al-Turabi. Mohamed Abdel Karim teaches at Qur'an al-Karim university in Khartoum (formerly known as al-Ma'ahad al-Ilmi, the Institute of Religious Sciences before the government elevated it to university status. The other four men are believed to be his followers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The arrests on 1 September took place a few days after the authorities announcing that they were releasing "all" political detainees. This was followed by the release of 32 detainees and 18 political prisoners convicted on criminal charges, but it is not yet confirmed that all political prisoners held before the announcement have in fact been freed. Similar announcements of releases of political prisoners in 1991 and 1992 were also rapidly followed by new arrests.

Political prisoners are held in Sudan on the basis of Constitutional Decree Two of 30 June 1989 which established a State of Emergency. The decree bans the "showing of any political opposition by any means to the regime of the Revolution for National Salvation".

Anyone detained by the Sudanese security authorities is at risk of ill-treatment, in particular those held in secret detention centres known as "ghost houses". Those whom the authorities suspect may have information about opposition activities are at risk of severe torture. In March 1995 one of the most notorious "ghost houses" was partially closed and its inmates transferred to a section of the main prison in Khartoum, still under the supervision of the security authorities but reportedly in better conditions. However, other "ghost houses" are known to exist.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of five men (naming some) on 1 September 1995 in Khartoum, who Amnesty International believes may be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned on account of their non-violent opposition to government policies;
- seeking assurances of their physical safety and guarantees that they are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;

- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless they are charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
President of the Republic of the Sudan People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier Bakri Hassan Saleh
Minister of the Interior People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Interior Minister Bakri Hassan Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD
Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddo
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Obeid Haj Ali
Chief Justice, Law Courts
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Angelo Beda Bambara
Chairman of the Human Rights Committee
of the Transitional National Assembly (TNA)
Omdurman, 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 5 November 1995.