

INTERNAL

File Index: AFR 54/41/90
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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Africa
Date: 28 November 1990

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

**Mustafa Taib Farah
SUDAN**

KEYWORDS

Theme: detention without trial/ ill-health/ prison conditions

SUMMARY

AI is concerned at the detention without trial of Mustafa Taib Farah, a 43-year-old civil servant, who was arrested on 20 November 1990 at his office in Khartoum North. He is being denied access to appropriate medical care for eye and other problems resulting from Behcet's disease, an inflammatory disease of unknown causation. AI is urging that he be given immediate access to a qualified medical doctor and provided with necessary medication to prevent serious deterioration to his health, including loss of his remaining eyesight. The organization urges the Sudanese authorities to arrange his prompt release unless he is to be charged with a recognisable crime.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Letters from medical professionals, preferably written in English or your own language, should be sent to the addresses below:

- urging that Mustafa Taib Farah be given access to a qualified medical doctor and provided with the medication necessary to treat his medical disorder as a matter of urgency
- urging that he be promptly released unless he is to be charged with a recognisable crime

ADDRESSES

Lieutenant-General Omar Hassan
Ahmad al-Bashir
Head of State
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum
Sudan

Brigadier-General Faisal Ali
Abu Salih
Minister of the Interior
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum
Sudan

Dr Shakir al-Sirraj
Minister of Health & Welfare
Ministry of Health & Welfare

Major Ibrahim Shams al-Din
People's Palace
PO Box 281

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Khartoum
Sudan

Khartoum
Sudan
(Member of the National
Salvation Revolution
Command Council)

COPIES to the Sudanese diplomatic representatives in your own country

EXTERNAL

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MEDICAL CONCERN

**Mustafa Taib FARAH
SUDAN**

Mustafa Taib Farah is a civil servant employed in the personnel section of the Department of River Communication in the Ministry of Transport. He was arrested at his office in Khartoum North on 20 November 1990 and taken to security headquarters. He was one of several people arrested on the same day, apparently for political reasons. His house is believed to have been searched prior to his arrest but charges have not been laid against him. He is currently being held incommunicado without access to appropriate medical care. He needs systemic steroids and cytotoxic drugs to control the symptoms of Behçet's disease, from which he suffers. Amnesty International is urging that he be provided with necessary medical care and that he be released from detention unless he is to be charged with a recognisable criminal offense.

Background

Mustafa Farah is 43 years old with a wife and a 14-year-old daughter. In the early 1970s he had been an active trade unionist in the Clerical Union at Sudan Railways and was imprisoned for a year for his trade union activities before being acquitted by a military tribunal. In 1985 he lost his sight due to the progression of Behçet's disease, an idiopathic inflammatory disease particularly affecting the skin and eyes. In April 1990, he travelled to Moscow to receive specialized ophthalmic treatment and over the following four months was operated for glaucoma and cataracts. As a result he regained limited vision in his left eye, sufficient for him to resume work in the civil service in September 1990.

Prior to his arrest, Mr Farah was receiving medication - steroids, cytotoxic drugs and eye-drops - to control the effects of Behçet's disease and he is now believed to be deprived of this medication. As a consequence, he is at serious risk of deterioration of his health, including his remaining eye sight.

Amnesty International continues to be concerned at reports of torture and ill-treatment in Sudan and at the harsh conditions and lack of adequate medical care in places of detention. It has repeatedly called on the Sudanese authorities to ensure that the basic human rights of prisoners are protected. [See *Sudan: health workers and human rights*, AFR 54/35/90, October 1990].