

PUBLIC

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conscience**

Torture and ill-treatment/incommunicado detention/ possible prisoners of

SUDAN

**Sati' Mohamed Al-Hajj (m), human rights lawyer
Yusuf Hussein (m)
Tariq Ahmed Gasim (m), aged 21
Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed (m), aged 21**

The four men named above are being held incommunicado by the security forces and are at risk of torture and ill-treatment. They were allegedly detained because they planned to commemorate the fifteenth anniversary of the summary execution of relatives. They appear to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for exercising their right to non-violent freedom of expression and association.

The detainees were arrested on 21 April in Khartoum. Tariq Ahmed Gasim and Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed were arrested along with four boys aged between 15 and 18. Some 35 members of the National Security Forces reportedly surrounded the house in which they were meeting to organise an event to take place on 23 April to commemorate their relatives, who were amongst 28 officers executed on 24 April 1990 after being accused of plotting a military coup. Sati' Mohamed Al-Hajj and Yusuf Hussein, who had been planning to support the event, were arrested at their homes, and are being held at an unknown location.

After their arrest, the security forces took Tariq Ahmed Gasim and Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed and the four boys to their office in Khartoum North. The four boys were released later the same evening. They claimed that members of the security forces had beaten them and forced them to jump up and down on a hot floor.

At 10am on 22 April, the families of Tariq Ahmed Gasim and Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed demonstrated outside the offices of the National Security Forces in Khartoum North, demanding their release. Tariq Ahmed Gasim and Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed were shown to the families in the reception area of the offices but were then taken back into detention. The families of the two claim that they looked as if they had been beaten. On 22 April, the security forces arrested and released other organizers of the event; one was reportedly beaten and given 40 lashes before he was released. There is no news of any charges being brought against Tariq Ahmed Gasim, Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed, Sati' Mohamed Al-Hajj and Yusuf Hussein.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The present President of Sudan, General Omar al-Bashir, took power in a military coup in June 1989. In April 1990 the government announced that they had foiled an attempted coup. Scores of soldiers were arrested and 24 hours later, 28 army officers, including many high-ranking officers, were executed after a summary trial where they had no legal representation. Some of the officers are said to have been executed before the trial. The families of the officers continue to demonstrate on the anniversary of their deaths and demand to restore democracy, bring the perpetrators of the executions to justice and to deliver the bodies to their families. 2005 marks the fifteenth anniversary of these executions.

Freedom of association and expression in Sudan continues to be severely restricted and many arrests have taken place over the past month around commemorations of past events and demonstrations.

On 6 April security forces surrounded the headquarters of the opposition Umma Party in Omdurman, across the River Nile from Khartoum, as they were preparing to commemorate the twentieth anniversary of the demonstrations which led to the fall of the government of former President Ja'far al-Nimeiri. They arrested 22 young activists and reportedly beat them. Two other party members are still detained.

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

- expressing concern for the safety of Tariq Ahmed Gasim, Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed, Sati' Mohamed Al-Hajj and Yusuf Hussein, who are being held incommunicado after their arrest in Khartoum on 21 April;
- calling for their immediate release as they appear to be prisoners of conscience held solely for preparing a non-violent commemoration;
- seeking assurances that the detainees will not be tortured or ill-treated
- expressing concern at allegations that four boys aged between 15 and 18 arrested with Tariq Ahmed Gasim and Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed were beaten and ill-treated, and that Tariq Ahmed Gasim and Fawaz Salah Al-Sayed may have been beaten;
- calling for a full and impartial investigation into these allegations, and for anyone found responsible for torture or ill-treatment to be brought to justice;
- calling for the detainees to be given immediate access to their families, legal counsel and any medical attention they may need;
- calling on the Sudan authorities to abide by international human rights standards they have ratified by ensuring freedom of expression and association.

APPEALS TO:

(Please note that it may be difficult to get through to Sudanese fax numbers. Please keep trying; if you still cannot get through, please send appeals by mail.)

Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
First Vice-President
People's Palace , PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 183 771025
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 183 779383
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

El Tayeb Harun Ali
Head of Complaints Committee
Human Rights Advisory Council
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 183 781343

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 3 June 2005.