

PUBLIC

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UA 145/05 Fear of Torture/Incommunicado Detention

SUDAN Hassaballah Hassab al-Nabi Issa (m)
Ibrahim Mohammed Jadallah (m)
Mustafa Abdallah al-Jamil (m)
Mohammed Al-Jazuli Adam (m)
Yassin Yusuf Abdallah (m)
Jalal Shaib (m)
Isam Mohammed Yusuf (m)

The seven men named above were arrested on 22 May at around 8pm, at a private house in Nyala, state capital of South Darfur, in western Sudan. They are held incommunicado by National Security at an unknown location, and they are at grave risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

The seven are members of Arab nomad groups. Most are linked to community leaders opposed to the attacks, killings and forced displacement of settled farming communities which have taken place in Darfur over the past two years. They were reportedly discussing ways of reconciling different ethnic groups when they were arrested. They appear to be prisoners of conscience, arrested solely for this peaceful attempt to reconcile the parties to the conflict in Darfur.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Darfur has been the scene of internal armed conflict since February 2003, when the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) took up arms against the government because of what they perceived as the lack of government protection for their people and the marginalisation and underdevelopment of the region. After that, the government gave free rein to the *Janjawid* militias, mostly drawn from nomad groups and armed by the government, to kill and abduct civilians, mainly from the agricultural ethnic groups, and destroy their property. More than 1.6 million people have been driven from their homes in rural areas, and now live in camps around the towns and villages of Darfur; some 200,000 have fled to Chad. Some 3,000 African Union troops and personnel are in the region to monitor ceasefire violations, but forced displacement, killings, rape and plundering of property by militias aided by government troops are continuing. The SLA and JEM have also attacked civilians.

The government has held reconciliation ceremonies between opposing ethnic groups, but it is unclear how far these are merely for publicity or are real reconciliations. The arrest of the seven members of Arab groups is part of a pattern in Sudan where the government has arrested those who seek reconciliation or who publicise human rights violations, rather than arresting the perpetrators of the violations. The government has consistently failed to bring members of the *Janjawid* militias to justice for killings or rape. However, on 30 May it charged the director of Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), Netherlands, with crimes against the state for publishing false information because of a report made public in March on the large numbers displaced people being raped in Darfur.

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

- expressing concern at the detention of the men (naming them), and saying that they appear to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for their peaceful attempts to reconcile the opposing groups in Darfur, and calling on the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally;

- asking for assurances that they are being humanely treated, and calling for them to be given immediate access to their families, lawyers and independent doctors;
- calling on the authorities to give them access to international monitors, including the African Union force in Darfur, the International Committee of the Red Cross and UN human rights monitors.

APPEALS TO: (note that some fax numbers will first give an answering machine: please wait, and a fax tone will follow)

Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
First Vice-President
People's Palace, PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 183 779977

Salutation: Your Excellency

Major-General Abdul-Rahim Muhammed Hussein
Minister of Internal Affairs and Presidential Advisor on Darfur
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: +249 183 773974

+249 183 773046

Salutation: Your Excellency

Al-Hajj Atta al-Manan
Governor of South Darfur State
Presidential Palace, PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Fax : + 249 183 779977

Salutation: Dear Governor

COPIES TO:

Mr Hamadtu Mukhtar
Chair of the Human Rights Committee
National Assembly
Omdurman, Sudan

Fax: + 249 187 560 950

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 12 July 2005.