

PUBLIC

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03 August 2004

UA 239/04 Fear of torture / Prisoners of Conscience

SUDAN **Abazar Ahmed Abu Al-Bashir (m), aged 42, lawyer**
Buthayna Mohamed Ahmed (f), aged 36, human rights defender

The people named above have been arrested apparently because they have called on the Sudanese authorities to put an end to the conflict in Darfur, in the west of the country. They are at risk of torture. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience, detained solely for the peaceful expression of their opinions.

Lawyer Abazar Ahmed Abu al Bashir was arrested by National Security and Intelligence Agency (NSIA) officers at his offices in the town of Nyala, South Darfur state, on 24 July. He is detained at the NSIA offices in Nyala, where people are frequently reported to have been tortured. He does not appear to have been charged with any offence. Eight days earlier, he had handed a letter to the governor of South Darfur State, signed by leaders of a number of ethnic groups in Darfur, urging an end to the conflict.

Buthayna Mohamed Ahmed is an activist in the Sudanese Women's Union. The NSIA arrested her at her house in Nyala and took her to their offices on 29 July. The next day they moved her to Nyala General prison. She does not appear to have been charged with any offence, and has not been allowed any medical treatment, or access to her family or lawyers.

Before she was arrested she had called for peace, and the disarmament of the militias operating in Darfur, through the Sudanese Women's Union, which has traditionally been close to the Sudanese government.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Sudanese government is supporting and funding the *Janjawid* militia group, which is attacking, killing, raping and abducting civilians in the state of Darfur. So far around one million people have fled from their villages, which the *Janjawid* have burnt; more than 110,000 have crossed the border into Chad. The *Janjawid* are frequently accompanied by Sudanese armed forces during raids, and government aircraft have bombed villages.

For the latest information on the conflict in Darfur, please refer to your national Amnesty International website, or go to <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/sdn-index-eng>.

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

- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Abazar Ahmed Abu Al Bashir and Buthayna Mohamed Ahmed, detained by security forces in Nyala, Darfur;
- expressing fears for their safety and calling on the authorities to give assurances that they will not be tortured or ill-treated in custody;
- urging the authorities to allow them immediate and unrestricted access to their families, legal counsel and any medical attention they may need;
- calling on the authorities to ensure that human rights activists are not harassed or detained and to respect their obligations under international law.

APPEALS TO:

Governor of South Darfur
Engineer Al-Hajj Atta Manan
Governor of South Darfur
c/o People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 183 771 024
Salutation: Dear Governor

Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha
First Vice-President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 183 779977
+ 249 183 771651
Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax : + 249 183 777268
Salutation: Dear Minister

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COPIES TO:

Dr Yasir Sid Ahmed
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 183 779173
+ 249 183 770883

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.