

EXTERNAL

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Fear of Torture

14 February 1996

SUDAN
Moslih Salim Said, truck driver
Lieutenant General Ahmad al-Badawi, air force (retired)
Farah Hassan Suleiman, lawyer
Atif Mohamed Idris, medical doctor
Mohiadin Ali Daoud, former civil servant
Babiker Mohamed Gharib, mechanic
Osman Mohamed Gharib, mechanic

Amnesty International fears that the seven men named above are facing torture following their arrest in Sudan in late January 1996. Moslih Salim Said, a truck-driver, was reportedly arrested in the eastern border town of Kassala near the end of January. It is alleged that under torture he named the six other men; retired air force officer Ahmad al-Badawi and Farah Hassan Suleiman were reportedly arrested in Khartoum on 29 January; the other four were detained in Khartoum two days later. All seven are reported to be held incommunicado without charge or trial in an unknown location in Khartoum.

The Sudanese authorities are reported to have accused the men of being linked to the Sudanese National Alliance Forces, a grouping of former Sudanese army personnel, who form part of the military wing of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). Specifically, the authorities are reported to have claimed that the seven men were responsible for organizing the recruitment of northern Sudanese youths for military training in Eritrea. The NDA, which is active in Eritrea, is an umbrella organization of Sudanese opposition political parties, trade unions and the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA).

BACKGROUND

Amnesty International's concern that the seven men are being subjected to torture is intensified because over the past two months the Sudanese authorities have shown signs of feeling under intense pressure from their eastern neighbours. In January the Eritrean government allowed the NDA to hold a high-level meeting in Asmara at which plans to launch military activity in northern Sudan were announced. On 22 January Issaias Afewerki, the President of Eritrea, announced that "if the alliance [NDA] needs weapons, we will support the Sudanese opposition without hesitation".

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian government has demanded that the Sudanese authorities hand over three men accused of participating in the attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak while on a visit to Addis Ababa in June 1995. The Sudan Government has counter-accused the Ethiopians of military aggression on the shared border and has launched a mass mobilization of the Popular Defence Force (PDF) militia. In mid-January Ethiopia called for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council which on 31 January led to a Security Council resolution calling on the Sudan to hand over the three men within 60 days.

In this context, an accusation of alleged involvement with the Sudanese National Alliance Forces is extremely serious and prisoners held on this accusation are at grave risk of torture.

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 detention without charge or trial of Ahmad al-Badawi, Farah Hassan Suleiman, Atif Mohamed Idris, Moslih Salim Said, Mohiadin Ali Daoud, Babiker Mohamed Gharib and Osman Mohamed Gharib;
- seeking assurances that they are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment and urging that their whereabouts in custody be made public and that they are granted immediate and regular access to their families, legal counsel and any necessary medical attention;
- urging that they be released immediately unless they are to be 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: 22411 KAID SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier Bakri Hassan Saleh

Minister of the Interior

People's Palace

PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Minister of the Interior 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: 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

* The TNA's Human Rights Committee was created by Sudan's government-appointed Transitional National Assembly in December 1992, apparently to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda. The Committee's Chairman has said that it investigates reports of human rights violations.

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 27 March 1996.