

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 54/01/99

UA 01/99 Fear of torture or ill-treatment / Possible Prisoner of

Conscience

SUDAN Mohamed Mahjoub Mohamed Ali, leading member of the banned Sudan Communist Party

Amnesty International fears that Mohamed Mahjoub Mohamed Ali, who was arrested in the capital Khartoum on 28 December 1998, is at risk of torture or ill-treatment in incommunicado detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Mohamed Mahjoub Mohamed Ali was arrested the day before an open memorandum was sent to President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, signed by himself and 55 other leading members of the Sudanese opposition. The memorandum requested the restoration of democracy in Sudan, respect for human rights and an end to the civil war. It also called for the establishment of a transitional government of national unity in order to seek a mandate to end the current conflict, and to lead the country towards general elections under regional and international supervision.

The memorandum was issued three days before the enactment of a new law, on 1 January 1999, authorizing political associations, which the government says will offer greater political freedom. Opposition groups, however, view the law as merely a cosmetic gesture which does not grant genuine political freedom and have said that they will not register their parties in accordance with it. On 1 January a rally of several hundred anti-government demonstrators was forcefully broken up by police. The atmosphere in the capital remains politically tense.

Mohamed Mahjoub Mohamed Ali, a leading member of the banned Sudan Communist Party, has been arrested and held in incommunicado detention on several previous occasions as a result of his opposition to the Sudan government.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in Arabic, English or your own language:

- seeking assurances that Mohamed Mahjoub Mohamed Ali, who was arrested on 28 December 1998, is not being tortured or ill-treated in incommunicado detention;
- expressing concern that he may be a prisoner of conscience arrested solely because of his opposition to the government;
- urging that he be given immediate and regular access to his family, legal representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- appealing for him to be released if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

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

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Minister of Justice Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: c/o 22411 KAID SD or 22604 IPOL SD

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail, Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Hafez al-Sheikh al-Zaki
Chief Justice
Supreme Court
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Ahmad al-Mufti
Secretary
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302
Khartoum, Sudan

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 15 February 1999.