

UA 21/97 Fear of torture / Possible prisoners of conscience 21 January 1997

SUDAN Mohamed Mahjub Mohamed Ali, accountant

Ali Ahmed al-Said, lawyer  
Gamal Abdel Rahman, musician  
Mohamed Nourain, engineer  
Yahya Mudalal, trade unionist  
Saudi Darraj, trade unionist  
Taha Said Ahmed, trade unionist  
Abdalla Malik, trade unionist  
Nasr Ali Nasr, trade unionist  
Kamil Abdel Rahman al-Sheik, trade unionist  
Siddiq Youssif al-Nur, member of the Communist Party  
al-Haj Karoum, member of the Communist Party  
Mohamed Adam, member of the Communist Party  
Awad Al-Karim Mohamed Ahmed, member of the Communist Party  
Abdel Karim Karomal, member of the Communist Party  
Abdel Aziz al-Rufai, member of the Communist Party  
Gaafar, member of the Communist Party  
Kouko, member of the Communist Party  
Mohamed Abdin Osman, member of the Democratic Unionist Party

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~~Ali Simat, member of the Democratic Unionist Party~~  
Sid Ahmed al-Husseini, member of the Democratic Unionist Party  
Hashim Tullub  
Dr Osman Sour Kati  
Mahdi Abdelrahman Ali

Amnesty International has received reports of a further 24 arrests by the Sudanese authorities of alleged political opponents since the beginning of January 1997. They include members of the Communist Party and the Democratic Unionist Party, both of which are banned, and trade unionists.

All are being detained without charge or trial in Khartoum, Sudan's capital. It is not known where they are being held, but some may be in a security service-run section of Kober Prison. Amnesty International fears that these men are at risk of torture and ill-treatment and is concerned that they may be prisoners of conscience.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

At least 25 members of the *Umma* Party, many of them senior figures in the party, have also been arrested in January 1997 and remain in detention (see UA 08/97, AFR 54/01/97, 10 January; UA 13/97, AFR 54/02/97, 15 January; and UA 20/97, AFR 54/03/97, 21 January). Sadiq al-Mahdi, a former prime minister of Sudan and leader of the *Umma* Party, escaped from Sudan in mid-December 1996 to Eritrea, where the opposition National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is based. The political atmosphere in Sudan has become increasingly tense since armed forces belonging to the opposition NDA cooperated with the primarily southern armed opposition group, the Sudan People's Liberation Army, to capture the northern Sudanese border town of Kurmuk on 12 January 1997. The Sudanese government has accused the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments of supporting the rebel offensive. Both have denied that they are doing so. Fighting is reported to be continuing.

On 14 January 1997, Gaspàr Birò, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Sudan, was expelled from the country by the government on the pretext that it could not guarantee his safety.

Anyone detained by the Sudanese security authorities is at risk of ill-treatment and torture, in particular during interrogation in security offices. In the past the authorities have blamed torture and ill-treatment on undisciplined security officials. Amnesty International's information, however, is that torture and ill-treatment in security force custody are systematic.

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

- expressing concern at the detention without charge of the above men, who may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their suspected opposition to the Sudan Government;
- seeking assurances that the detainees are not being tortured or ill-treated;
- urging that they be given immediate and regular access to their families, legal representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- appealing for them to be released if they are not to be charged with recognizably criminal offences 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**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

2) Mr 'Abd al-Basit Sabdarat  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Ministry of Justice  
Khartoum, Sudan

**Telegrams: Minister of Justice 'Abd al-Basit Sabdarat, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Telexes: c/o 22411 KAID 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**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

1) Mr Obeid Haj Ali  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court  
Khartoum, Sudan

2) 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 March 1997.