

EXTERNAL

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*"DISAPPEARANCE" OF NURSE AND DENTIST FROM
THE NUBA MOUNTAINS*

Mohamed Nowar Aso and Mirghani Kafi

SUDAN

Mohamed Nowar Aso and Mirghani Kafi, a dentist and nurse respectively, are among a large number of individuals to have "disappeared" in recent years following arrest in Sudan. Both are from the Nuba Mountains, one of the regions affected by a long-standing civil war which is being fought in the south of Sudan and adjacent areas such as the Nuba Mountains, southern Blue Nile province and Darfur.

Very grave violations of human rights have been committed within the context of the war and prisoners arrested in the war zones are at particularly severe risk of extrajudicial executions, torture or "disappearance".

Mohamed Nowar Aso is a dentist who "disappeared" from the Nuba Mountain region in 1991. He was arrested in late 1990 by military intelligence agents when returning from the mosque in the provincial capital, Kadugli. Nothing is known of his whereabouts or fate, although he is believed to have originally come into conflict with the authorities for having protested against turning the civilian hospital in Kadugli into a military hospital. Mohamed Nowar Aso is a Moslem in his forties; he has two wives and eight children.

Mirghani Kafi is a male nurse who was arrested in September 1991, also in Kadugli. The reasons for his arrest are unknown, but again nothing is known of his fate since arrest and he too is regarded as having "disappeared".

Amnesty International is seeking to clarify the fate of both men.

Background

The current conflict began in 1983 in southern Sudan, but soon spread to adjacent areas. The rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) infiltrated the Nuba Mountains in 1985 prompting counter-insurgency operations against SPLA forces by the then-civilian government of Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi. The Nuba are a collection of diverse ethnic groups speaking over 50 languages who regard themselves as African rather than Arab.

In June 1989 Lt-Gen Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir seized power in a military coup in Sudan and the military government has since continued the counter-insurgency war against the SPLA. A pattern of arrests, killings and "disappearances" by military intelligence became apparent in the Nuba Mountains in late 1990 and intensified in 1991.

Hundreds of Nuba have been arrested on suspicion of either SPLA sympathies or of opposition to the government and it has become apparent that the destruction of Nuba political leadership is another dimension of the government's counter-insurgency war in the Nuba Mountains. Educated Nuba, former members of the banned Sudan National Party, traditional leaders in areas thought to be sympathetic to the SPLA, civil servants, school teachers, health workers and others have been detained and tortured. Scores of those arrested have subsequently "disappeared" and hundreds of others have been extrajudicially executed as the government has stepped up its offensive and pursued a policy of deliberate destruction and displacement in the Nuba Mountains.

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To: Medical professionals
From: Medical Office / Research Department - Africa
Date: 11 March 1994

MEDICAL LETTER WRITING ACTION

Mirghani Kafi and Mohamed Nowar Also
SUDAN

Keywords

Theme: "Disappearance"

Profession/association: Nurse/dentist

Summary

Attached is information about the "disappearance" of a dentist and nurse from the Nuba Mountains region of Sudan. Since their arrest in 1990 and 1991, nothing is known of their whereabouts or fate. The Nuba Mountains region is one of the areas affected by a civil war which has continued since 1983. Please see the details attached.

Recommended Actions

Letters are requested from medical professionals to the addresses below:

- raising the cases of Mohamed Nowar Also and Mirghani Kafi, a dentist and nurse who were arrested in Kadugli in late 1990 and September 1991 respectively
- noting that, although both are known to have been taken into detention, nothing has been heard of their whereabouts since
- expressing concern about the phenomenon of "disappearances" in Sudan and adding that you are concerned that these two health professionals may have been ill-treated, tortured or extrajudicially executed in custody
- stating that you wish to seek information on what became of these men following their arrest and urging the government to take steps to locate the two men and to investigate their whereabouts and fate

Addresses

Lieutenant-General Omar
Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Brigadier-General 'Abd
al-Rahim Mohamed Hussain
Minister of the Interior/
Secretary General of the President's
Office

Ministry of the Interior
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Hussain Sulziman Abu Salih
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr 'Abd al-'Aziz Shiddu
Minister of Justice and
Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Copies to:

Lieutenant-Colonel Gaaluak Deng Garang
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health
Khartoum, Sudan

with a covering letter stating that you wish to raise with him the cases of the "disappearance" of these two health professionals from the Nuba Mountains and, in particular, the fact that Mohamed Nowar also was arrested following conflict over Kadugli hospital being transformed from a civilian to a military hospital.