

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 122/95 Fear of torture \ Possible prisoner of conscience 1 June 1995

SUDAN Sara Nugdallah (f), university lecturer and women's activist

Sara Nugdallah is reported to have been detained in Sudan's capital Khartoum in late May as part of a crackdown on the leadership of the *Ansar*, a traditional order of Sudanese Islam, and the banned Umma party, which is an associated political party. Amnesty International is concerned that she may be at risk of torture or ill-treatment and that she may be a prisoner of conscience. It is not clear where she is being held.

A member of the Umma Party's executive and women's committees, Sarah Nugdallah is an outspoken critic of the military government which seized power in a coup in 1989 and has been repeatedly detained. Her current detention appears to be connected to the arrest, on 16 May, of Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of the *Ansar* order, leader of the banned opposition Umma party and Sudan's Prime Minister overthrown in the 1989 coup (see UA 119/95 (AFR 54/15/95, 25 May 1995). While the authorities have not yet indicated why Sara Nugdallah has been detained they are reported to have announced that Sadiq al-Mahdi is "being interrogated for involvement in subversive activities". The authorities have given contradictory information about these alleged activities; some spokesmen are reported to have accused Sadiq al-Mahdi and the Umma Party of working with the armed opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army. There are reports that other leaders of the *Ansar* order and Umma Party have also been detained.

Independent sources have said that Sadiq al-Mahdi's arrest appears to be a reaction to an outspoken speech he made criticizing the legitimacy of Sudan's current rulers on the occasion of the Muslim feast of 'Eid al-Addha on 10 May. The military government, which espouses a radical Islamist ideology, is deeply sensitive to opposition from other interpretations of Islam.

The repeated harassment and arrest of Sara Nugdallah is described in an Amnesty International document (AFR 54/44/94) giving cases for appeals as part of the organization's current campaign against human rights abuses in Sudan.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Sara Nugdallah, who Amnesty International believes may be a prisoner of conscience, imprisoned on account of her non-violent opposition to government policies;
- seeking assurances of her physical safety and guarantees that she is not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that she be immediately and unconditionally released unless she is charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial;
- calling on the Sudan Government to put a stop to arbitrary detention without charge and to the torture and ill-treatment of individuals suspected of being government opponents.

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: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Dr al-Tayib Ibrahim Mohamed Kheir

Minister of the Interior

People's Palace

PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

**Telegrams: Minister of the Interior Dr al-Tayib Ibrahim Mohamed Kheir,
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: 22459 KHRJA SD or 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 15 July 1995.