

URGENT ACTION

DETAINED SUDANESE JOURNALISTS TORTURED

Abuzar Al Amin and Al Tahir Abu Jawhara, who work for the Sudanese newspaper, *Rai Al Shaab*, have been tortured by National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) agents after they were arrested with three other colleagues on 15 and 16 May.

Abuzar Al Amin, the Deputy Editor in Chief of *Rai Al Shaab* newspaper, was arrested on 15 May with three of his colleagues, **Ashraf Abdelaziz**, the newspaper's editor, printer **Abu Baker Al Sammani**, and administrator **Nagi Dahab**. **Al Tahir Abu Jawhara**, head of the political news desk of *Rai Al Shaab* was arrested separately on 16 May.

On 19 May, the men were transferred to the "Crimes against the State" Prosecution offices in the Sudanese capital, Khartoum. Abuzar Al Amin's family visited him there for the first time on 20 May. He had been tortured while held in incommunicado detention following his arrest. He was covered in bruises and complained of back pain, blood in his urine and insomnia. He is in need of urgent specialized medical attention.

Al Tahir Abu Jawhara has also reportedly been tortured. Abu Baker Al Sammani has since been released by the NISS.

The arrest of the *Rai Al Shaab* staff immediately followed the arrest of Hassan Al Turabi, leader of the opposition Popular Congress Party. The office of *Rai Al Shaab*, which supports the Popular Congress Party, was raided by NISS agents. When employees arrived for work on 16 May, the offices were closed and guarded by NISS agents.

Abuzar al Amin has been charged with several criminal offences, including undermining the Constitutional system, espionage against the State, and publication of false news. Some of these charges are punishable by the death penalty in Sudan. Abuzar al Amin was interrogated only about his work as a journalist. Amnesty International believes that he is being held and charged solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression.

PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling for an investigation into the allegations of torture and other ill-treatment of Abuzar Al Amin and Al Tahir Abu Jawhara and urging the authorities to hold those responsible accountable;
- Calling on the authorities to provide immediate and specialized medical attention to the two men, and to allow a medical examination of Ashraf Abdelaziz and Nagi Dahab to record reports of torture if it has occurred;
- Calling for the men, who remain detained to be immediately and unconditionally released;
- Calling for the 2010 National Security Act to be reformed to remove the excessive powers of the NISS, including powers of search, seizure, arrest and detention without judicial oversight for four and a half months.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 7 JULY 2010 TO:

President

HE President Omar Al Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum
Sudan

Fax: +249 183 774 339

Salutation: Your Excellency

Director of the NISS

Mohamed Atta Al-Moula Abbas
Director of the NISS
NISS Headquarters
Khartoum
Sudan

Salutation: Dear Director Abbas

And copies to:

Dr Abdelmuneim Osman Mohamed
Taha
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302
Khartoum
Sudan

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 119/10 AFR 54/017/2010. Further information: www.amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR54/017/2010/en

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Through Sudan's 2010 National Security Act, which came into force in February, the NISS retains extensive powers of arrest, detention, search and seizure. Detainees can be held for up to four and a half months without judicial review and NISS agents have immunity for any human rights violations carried out as part of their work. Amnesty International has documented numerous cases where the powers of the NISS have been used to arbitrarily detain, torture and otherwise ill-treat student activists, human rights defenders and journalists.

The arrests of the *Rai Al Shaab* staff follows on from a number of incidents in recent months where journalists, activists, and others who speak out against the Sudanese government have been detained by the NISS.

Further information on UA: 119/10 Index: AFR 54/019/2010 Issue Date: 26 May 2010

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