

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 203/94 Fear of torture

26 May 1994

SUDAN Mahjoub Sherif, poet
 Salah al-A'alim, trade unionist
 Bushra Abdel-Karim, lawyer and Secretary General of Sudanese Youth
 Union

Mahjoub Sherif, Salah al-A'alim and Bushra Abdel-Karim were reportedly arrested in Khartoum on or around 11 May 1994. It is not known why they have been detained or where they are being held, but, as members of the banned Sudan Communist Party, they are at serious risk of torture while in detention. Amnesty International also believes that they may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their non-violent opposition to the government.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Political prisoners are held without charge or trial in Sudan on the basis of Constitutional Decree Two of 30 June 1989 which established a State of Emergency. The decree bans the "showing of any political opposition by any means to the regime of the Revolution for National Salvation".

Anyone detained by the Sudanese security authorities is at risk of ill-treatment, in particular those held in secret detention centres known as "ghost houses". Those whom the authorities suspect may have information about opposition activities are at risk of severe torture. In the past the authorities have blamed torture and ill-treatment on undisciplined security officials. Amnesty International's information, however, suggests that torture and ill-treatment remain systematic.

Mahjoub Sherif has been detained on a number of previous occasions both under former governments and under the present government which seized power in June 1989. In September 1989 he was arrested with scores of other political activists and remained in detention until May 1991.

Mahjoub Sherif is a poet well known for his writings about the struggle for freedom and democracy, and is popularly known in Sudan as "the people's poet".

Leave Me Handcuffed by Mahjoub Sherif

*Leave me handcuffed in your prisons,
Forget me detained in your cells,
For I fight for a better future,
I fight for our children who will come
And these marvellous people
I fight for a humane life
.....
Revolution is my destiny
In my short life-time,
Long live freedom*

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters either in English or Arabic, or in your own language:
- expressing concern at the arrest in mid-May 1994 of Mahjoub Sherif, Salah al-A'alim, Bushra Abdel-Karim whom Amnesty International believes may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their non-violent opposition to the

government;

- seeking public assurances of their safety and guarantees that they are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that their whereabouts in custody and grounds for detention be made public and that they are granted immediate and regular access to their family and to legal counsel;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released if they are being held for their non-violent opinions, and that otherwise they be charged with a recognizably criminal offence 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
Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD
Faxes: 249 11 71724
Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Husayn
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Brig-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammed Husayn, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD
Faxes: 249 11 71724/76554/73046/70186
Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

3) Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
Faxes: 249 11 74063
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi
Chief Justice
Law Courts
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Hussein Suleiman Abu Salih
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

Dr A. al-Mufti
Secretary of Human Rights Commission*
Khartoum, Sudan

* The Human Rights Commission is a government-backed body, nominally independent, but apparently created to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda.

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 8 July 1994.