

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

AI Index: AFR 54/23/94
Distr: UA/SC

UA 244/94

Fear of Torture

22 June 1994

SUDAN **Sadiq al Mahdi, former Prime Minister**
 Abdel-Rahman Farah, former Security Advisor
 Hamad Omar Bagadi, veterinary lecturer

Sadiq al Mahdi, former Prime Minister and current leader of the banned Umma Party, was arrested at his home in Khartoum on 20 June 1994. The government has alleged that he is involved in a plot to overthrow the military government.

A television broadcast shown on 20 June accused Mahdi's Umma Party of activities including planning to assassinate prominent Sudanese political figures.

The same broadcast on state-controlled television included a recording of the apparent confessions of two senior members of the Umma Party, Abdel-Rahman Farah and Hamad Omar Bagadi. The two men, both of whom are known to suffer from poor health, were arrested on 20 May 1994 allegedly in connection with the same plot. Both were reportedly tortured before being transferred on 31 May to a military hospital in Omdurman.

The current whereabouts of all three men are unknown and Amnesty International fears that they are at risk of further torture.

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 of detainees is systematic.

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 on 20 June 1994 of Sadiq al Mahdi, and the continued detention of Abdel-Rahman Farar and Hamad Omar Bagadi, who were arrested on 20 May 1994;
- 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 and any necessary medical treatment;
- 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 3 August 1994.