

PUBLIC

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22 April 2003

UA 109/03 **Fear of torture or ill-treatment/incommunicado detention/detention without charge/
possible prisoners of conscience**

SUDAN **Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan (m), aged 41, journalist, member of the Arab Ba'ath
Socialist Party**

Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan, a member of the Sudanese Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party, is being detained incommunicado at an unknown location and has reportedly been tortured. Amnesty International fears that he may be detained solely on account of his political affiliation, and he may therefore be a prisoner of conscience.

Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan, an occasional journalist for the newspaper *Al-Ayam* (The Days), was arrested at his home by national security personnel at 2.30pm on 22 March and taken to an unknown place of detention. He has been held incommunicado since his arrest and has reportedly been tortured in detention. He has not been charged with any offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party split from the pro-Iraq Ba'ath Party in Sudan four years ago. The Arab Ba'ath Socialist Party is considered the fourth member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the main opposition coalition in the Sudan, which has been engaged in armed opposition to the government of President Lieutenant-General Omer al-Bashir in the eastern Sudan.

Political opposition and freedom of expression, assembly and association are still severely curtailed for a number of opposition groups, particularly those with relations with the NDA. Under the State of Emergency Act and the National Security Forces Act, the security services can hold people in incommunicado detention without access to judicial review for up to nine months.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in English or your own language:

- expressing grave concern for the safety of Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan, detained on 22 March, and still without access;
- calling on the authorities to immediately reveal the whereabouts of Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan and to give assurances that he will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- calling on the authorities to investigate reports that Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan was tortured, to compensate him if this is found to be true and to bring anyone found to have used violence against him to justice;
- urging the authorities to allow Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan immediate and unrestricted access to his relatives, legal counsel and any medical treatment he may need;
- calling on the authorities to abide by their commitments under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to either charge the detainee with a recognizably criminal offence and give him a prompt and fair trial in accordance with international standards, or to set him free immediately.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice

Khartoum, Sudan

Telegram: Justice Minister, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 799031

Salutation: Dear Minister

Major General Abdul-Rahim Muhammed Hussein

Minister of Internal Affairs

Ministry of Interior

PO Box 281

Khartoum, Sudan

Telegram: Minister of Internal Affairs, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax : +249 11 773046

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PO Box 873, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegram: Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 779383

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Dr Yasir Sid Ahmed

Advisory Council for Human Rights

PO Box 302

Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 779173 / 770883

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 June 2003.