

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Legal Concern/Fear of Torture

18 September 1992

SUDAN:

**Omar Mohamed Mokhtar - carpenter
Salah Mohamed Idris
Magdi Mohamedani
Mokhtar Fadul
Shehab Ahmad Gaafar - nurse
and an unknown number of other trade unionists**

Amnesty International has received reports about the detention and harassment of trade unionists in Khartoum and other northern Sudanese cities in advance of elections to trade union councils scheduled for the end of September 1992. The five trade unionists named above, who were arrested in late August 1992, are reported to remain in incommunicado detention in Khartoum. Their place of detention is unknown but is believed to be one of the capital's detention centres, known in Sudan as "ghost houses", run by the government's security service, Sudan Security. Large numbers of other trade unionists are reported to have been detained for brief periods ranging from a few hours to three or four days. Many trade unionists in Khartoum are reportedly required to report daily to the security headquarters. This has become a widely used technique to harass suspected opponents of the government.

Torture and ill-treatment are routine in "ghost houses" and the security headquarters.

Amnesty International has been able to confirm the torture in detention centres of more than 100 people arrested since November 1989. One of their victims, Ali Fadul, a medical doctor, is reported to have died as a result of torture on 22 April 1990 (see UA 164/90, AFR 54/22/90 of 25 April 1990). Mokhtar Fadul, who was arrested on 26 August 1992, is the brother of Ali Fadul. There is concern that he and the four other men named above are at risk of torture.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These detentions and incidents of harassment are part of a drive by the Sudan Government to influence the outcome of the first trade union elections to have been held since the current government took power on 30 June 1989. Trade unionists were an early target for the new rulers who arrested hundreds of prisoners of conscience from the trade unions in the months that followed the military overthrow of the elected government of Sadiq al-Mahdi. The councils of trade unions, which have historically played an important part in Sudanese politics, were dissolved and replaced by pro-government appointees. The government disbanded the two independent umbrella organizations for the trade unions and created a single new structure to which all trade unions are now affiliated. The authorities are attempting to ensure that while the elections appear free and fair only government supporters participate in them.

It is reported that many of those briefly detained have been made to sign undertakings that they will not stand for election or involve themselves in political activity in opposition to the elections.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of Omar Mohamed Mokhtar, Salah Mohamed Idris, Magdi Mohamedani, Mokhtar Fadul, Shehab Ahmad Gaafar and other trade unionists whom Amnesty International believes may be prisoners of conscience;
- expressing concern at their continuing incommunicado detention without charge or trial and expressing fear that they may be being tortured;

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- seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated, that their whereabouts in custody are made public and that they have immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and any necessary medical attention;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the National Salvation Revolutionary Command
Council
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) Brigadier-General al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior and Deputy Chairman of the
National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Brig-Gen al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

3) Mr Abdullah Idris
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Minister of Justice Abdullah Idris, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

1) Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi
Chief Justice
Law Courts
Khartoum
Sudan

2) Mr Ali Sahloul
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO BOX 873
Khartoum, Sudan

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 31 October 1992.