

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Further information on UA 156/90 (AFR 54/18/90, 23 April) - Fear of Torture/ Legal Concern

SUDAN: Alfred TABAN

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Amnesty International remains concerned that the continued detention without charge or trial of Alfred Taban, a prisoner of conscience who was initially held incommunicado at the security headquarters in Khartoum after his arrest on 31 March 1990, but who is now known to have been transferred a few weeks later to Kober prison in Khartoum. He is a journalist who worked as a part-time correspondent for Reuters and the BBC.

The Government has not disclosed any information about the reasons for Alfred Taban's arrest. However in April one Government official said that he had been accused of giving false information to the media and of writing a news story about a poem he claimed had been composed by the head of state. The head of state reportedly said in June that Alfred Taban "is being investigated because of his activities as a Sudanese Citizen".

Recently received information indicates that Alfred Taban has never in fact been questioned or interrogated since his arrest and that no charges have been brought against him. Under the state of emergency legislation he is not allowed to challenge the legal grounds for his detention before any court or judicial review commission. Amnesty International considers him to be a prisoner of conscience arrested because of his activities as a journalist and is calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

More than 20 journalists are also believed to be detained in Sudan. In February and March 1990 two foreign journalists were briefly held. On 21 August 1990 another journalist, Mohamed Ali Fatih al-Mardi, was sentenced to 14 years imprisonment by a special court in Khartoum. He was apparently charged with "waging war against the state", which is an offence punishable by death.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Hundreds of people have been arrested since a military government overthrew the elected civilian government of Sadiq al-Mahdi in June 1989. Although a number of detainees have been released uncharged, many remain in detention without charge or trial. These include trade union activists, academics, medical doctors, lawyers and journalists. More than 60 people arrested since November 1989 have been tortured by members of a new security organization called the "Security of the Revolution" while detained in "safe houses" and secret detention centres in Khartoum. One of them Ali Fadul, a medical doctor, is reported to have died as a result of torture (see UA 164/90, AFR 54/22/90, 25 April). Further arrests have been made since late April, with almost all those detained being held in unofficial detention centres rather than recognized places of imprisonment.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the continued detention without charge or trial of Alfred Taban;
- urging that he be given prompt access to relatives and legal counsel;
- explaining Amnesty International's concern that he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely because of his work as a journalist, and calling for his immediate and unconditional release.

APPEALS TO:

His Excellence Lieutenant-General
Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the
National Salvation Revolution
Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum

Brigadier General Mohamed
Saleh al-Zubeir
Vice President of the
National Salvation
Revolution Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum

Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan
al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Brig Gen Mohamed
Saleh al-Zubeir,
Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or
22411 KAID SD

Telexes: 22736 PROC SD

Lieutenant-Colonel Bakri Hasan Saleh
Member of the National Salvation Revolution Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Lt Col Bakri Hassan Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22736 PROC SD

COPIES TO: Diplomatic representatives of Sudan in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 12 October 1990.