

UA 281/07

Fear for Safety/Fear of Torture/Forced Relocation

SUDAN

36 displaced people from Otash Camp, South Darfur

Security forces seized 36 people from Otash Camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in South Darfur on the evening of 29 October. They are in danger of being tortured or otherwise ill-treated in detention.

There is a pattern of IDPs being detained incommunicado and beaten by police or national intelligence and security forces in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. A group of IDPs from Kalma Camp were arrested and detained by police on 21 August: most were beaten on arrest or during custody in Nyala Wasat Police Station. This is the police station where the detainees from Otash Camp are believed to be detained.

Following fighting between different ethnic groups in Kalma camp, on 18 October a large number of IDPs fled Kalma Camp, which is near Nyala. Most of those that fled the fighting went to Otash Camp, which is 24km from Kalma Camp. During the afternoon of 29 October police and soldiers went into Otash Camp to remove the recent arrivals and forcibly relocate them to a village named Amakisara, 23km from Nyala. Members of the African Mission in Sudan (AMIS), including military personnel, observers and AMIS police, went to the camp, but were ordered to leave by the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) colonel conducting the operation. They saw the camp residents fleeing while tents were destroyed and property was carried away in trucks. According to the UN, IDPs were being threatened by soldiers and police wielding sticks and rubber hoses.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

According to UN figures 2.2 million people in Darfur are now gathered in IDP camps. They were driven out of their homes when, in response to attacks by armed opposition groups, the government armed and supported local militias, known as the Janjawid, as a proxy force. The government and the Janjawid attempted to suppress the insurgency by deliberately targeting civilians of the same ethnicity as the armed opposition groups. About 95,000 people have been killed, and more than 200,000 have died over the past four years as a result of conflict-related hunger or disease. Vast areas of Darfur have been emptied of farmers, and hundreds of villages have been razed to the ground.

The UN has issued a statement expressing alarm at the violence against IDPs and the attempted forcible relocations in Otash Camp. IDPs have complained that attempts by the SAF and police to forcibly relocate them away from some camps have been increasing over the past few months. Government officials say that camps are too large. IDPs feel safer in the camps and have consistently resisted government pressure to move out of them into areas which are still dominated by armed members of the Janjawid militias who killed and displaced them. Forcible relocation is prohibited by international standards.

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

- demanding that those arbitrarily arrested in Otash Camp should be treated humanely and have immediate access to lawyers and their families;
- asking that they should be released if they are not immediately charged with a recognisably criminal offence,
- insisting that the authorities cease forcibly relocating IDP camp residents.

APPEALS TO:Head of State

Field Marshal Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President, People's Palace, PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: +249 183 782541

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Interior

Professor Al-Zubair Bashir Taha
Ministry of Interior, PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: +249 183 774 339 (Mark "FAO Minister of Interior")

Salutation: Dear Minister

Deputy Governor of South Darfur

Dr Farah Mustafa
Wilaya

Nyala

South Darfur, Sudan

Fax: +249 711 832535 (if no response, please send appeals by post)

Salutation: Dear Deputy Governor

COPIES TO:

Chair of the Human Rights Committee

Dr Barsila Joseph

National Assembly, Omdurman, Sudan

Fax: +249 15 560 950

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 12 December 2007.*****