

# URGENT ACTION

## PROTESTORS AT RISK OF TORTURE IN SUDAN

**On 30 January, protests spread across North Africa to Sudan's capital Khartoum. Following a crackdown by the security service and police, more than 70 people were arrested, with 20 still held in detention. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.**

On 30 January, around 2,000 people gathered in Khartoum for a peaceful demonstration. More than 70 people were arrested, including a large number of people in the streets before they reached the demonstrations. The National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) and riot police reportedly began searching for demonstration organizers the night before. Armed riot police and the NISS reportedly used batons and teargas to break up the demonstrations. Many of those arrested were injured. Reports suggest that a student demonstrator, **Mohamed Abdelrahman**, died in hospital on 31 January, after being injured as the police dispersed the demonstrators.

The Sunday protests were followed by arrests on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday when the protests spread outside Khartoum, and the NISS specifically targeted student movements and universities.

More than 25 detainees had been released by the evening of 31 January. Seven journalists who were held by the NISS for covering the demonstrations were also released. Many of the detainees were reportedly tortured and otherwise ill-treated in NISS detention. An unknown number of people are still being held in NISS custody. **Louis Awil Weriak, Youssif Mubarak Sadiq Al Mahdi** and his brother **Salah Mubarak Sadiq Al Mahdi, Mohammed Kamal Ibrahim Ahmed** and **Mahmoud Kamal Ibrahim Ahmed** are amongst those reportedly still detained by the NISS. Witnesses say that Louis Awil Weriak, a southern Sudanese, was tortured and is in a very poor physical condition. He remains in NISS detention. None of the detainees have so far had access to their families or lawyers, and no charges have been made against them up to date.

On 31 January, the NISS banned opposition newspaper *Ajrass Al Hurriya* from going to print, and stopped independent newspaper *Al Sahafa*, from distributing its daily edition. *Al Midan*, a newspaper affiliated to the Sudanese communist party, was also stopped from distributing its printed edition on Tuesday morning.

### PLEASE WRITE IMMEDIATELY in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to reveal the identities and whereabouts of those detained and grant them immediate access to their families, lawyers and to any medical treatment they might require;
- Calling on the authorities to release all those detained or charge them with recognizably criminal offences;
- Calling on the authorities to promptly and effectively investigate all allegations of torture and other serious human rights violations;
- Calling on the Sudanese government to immediately stop the harassment and intimidation of human rights activists and journalists in Sudan and to respect their right to freedom of expression and peaceful assembly;
- Calling for the 2010 National Security Act to be reformed to remove the excessive powers of the NISS, including powers of arrest and detention for four and a half months without judicial oversight.

### PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 16 MARCH 2011 TO:

#### President

HE Omar Hassan Ahmad Al Bashir  
Office of the President  
People's Palace PO Box 281  
Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax: +249 183 782 541

Salutation: Your Excellency

#### Minister of Justice

Mr Mohammed Bushara Dousa  
Ministry of Justice, PO Box 302  
Al Nil Avenue  
Khartoum, Sudan  
Fax: +249 183 764 168

Salutation: Your Excellency

#### And copies to:

Minister of Interior  
Mr Ibrahim Mohamed Hamed  
Ministry of Interior  
PO Box 873  
Khartoum, Sudan

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY  
INTERNATIONAL**



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### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Protests throughout the Middle East and North Africa began in Tunisia several weeks ago and extended to a number of other capitals. Inspired by these protests, the demonstrators in Sudan were calling for democracy and asking for an improvement in their socio-economic conditions.

The police and the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) in Sudan often arrest and ill-treat peaceful demonstrators, particularly when they are asking for their rights to be upheld. Student movements and organizations are regularly targeted by the NISS. Journalists suffer from harassment and various restrictions to their freedom of expression. Newspapers also suffer from the occasionally renewed censorship on newspapers. Three journalists – who are considered prisoners of conscience - are presently in prison, serving prison terms in relation to their work.

Torture or other forms of ill-treatment of students, human rights activists and journalists by the NISS is often reported in Sudan. The 2010 National Security Act (2010 NSA), passed in December 2009, gives members of the NISS extensive powers of arrest and detention. Under the same Act, NISS agents are also provided with immunity from prosecution for any act committed in the course of their work. The 2010 NSA maintained powers and immunities provided under the previous law, the 1999 National Security Forces Act. As a result of these laws, a culture of impunity has pervaded in Sudan and NISS members have been carrying out human rights violations with impunity.

UA: 18/11 Index: AFR 54/005/2011 Issue Date: 2 February 2011

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