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News Flash

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Sudan: Leading Sudanese human rights group targeted by Government

Amnesty International has learnt today that the Sudanese Government has launched legal proceedings against one of the country's leading human rights groups Sudan Organisation Against Torture (SOAT) in apparent attempt to silence the organisation.

According to local press reports, Sudan's Bureau of Crimes Against the State began proceedings against SOAT for spreading false information at the end of August but did not inform the organisation. If found guilty, members of the organisation could face more than 5 years in prison.

"The Government seems intent upon silencing an organization which has done so much to raise awareness of the human rights situation in Sudan," said Kolawole Olaniyan, Director of Amnesty International's Africa programme. "This latest development must be seen in the wider context of continued harassment of and attacks on human rights activists in Sudan as well as severe restrictions on freedom of expression, association and assembly."

SOAT, which has offices in Sudan and the UK as well members worldwide, is being charged under articles 59 (Disclosure of Military Information), 66 (Propagation of False news), 69 (Breach of Public Peace), 77 (Public Nuisance) of the 1991 Sudanese Penal Code.

The charges came after the publication of a press release by the organisation on the arrests that took place during riots on 1-3 August. The riots occurred in Khartoum and other major southern cities such as Juba and Malakal following the death of First Vice President Dr John Garang de Mabior in a helicopter crash.

Background

Sudan Organisation Against Torture (SOAT) is an independent non-governmental human rights organisation. established in 1993 working in Sudan and UK and has members worldwide. SOAT primary objective is preventing torture and challenging impunity.

SOAT works to rehabilitate Sudanese survivors of torture; provides legal assistance to survivors and individuals threatened with inhumane and degrading punishments; human rights education; researches, documents and campaigns against human rights abuses in Sudan on a national and international level.

Relevant documents

Sudan: Aid workers kidnapped in Darfur (AFR 54/073/2005)

Sudan: The rights of rights of Khartoum's displaced must be respected (AFR 54/072/2005)
Sudan: Investigations into John Garang's death must be independent (AFR 54/070/2005)

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