

PUBLIC

AI Index: AFR 54/05/98

UA 203/98 Possible prisoners of conscience / Fear of torture /  
Legal concern 16 July 1998

SUDANal-Haj Abdelrahman Abdullah Nugdullah, former government minister  
Abdelmahmud Abbo, a leading imam of the Ansar order of Islam  
Suleimen al-Khedir, business person  
Baha al-Din Hassan Osman, electrical engineer  
Mahmud Khalil, engineer  
Hamad al-Tahir  
Radwan  
and at least nine other men whose names are unknown

---

Following recent bomb attacks in Khartoum, the capital, the above-named men, who include prominent political opponents of the government, are reported to be in incommunicado detention. Torture and ill-treatment of those in security force custody are systematic, particularly during interrogation, and there are grave fears for the safety of the detainees.

The bombings, which occurred on 30 June 1998, coincided with the signing of a new Constitution by President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and the subsequent announcement by leading members of banned opposition parties of their intention to reestablish their parties in accordance with the new constitution. Later that day at least 30 people were arrested for questioning about the announcement - all, however, were released within 24 hours with the exception of Suleiman al-Khedir. Al-Haj Abdelrahman Abdullah Nugdullah, a former Minister of Religious Affairs and prominent Umma Party opponent of the current government, detained on many previous occasions, was arrested on 29 June.

Four days after the bombings the president announced that exiled opposition parties were responsible and that persons convicted would be sentenced to death by hanging and then crucified. The authorities also announced that an emergency military court would try persons accused of the bombings. In the past such courts in Sudan have not met international standards of fairness.

Baha al-Din Hassan Osman, Mahmud Khalil, Hamad al-Tahir and Rudwan, all believed to be employees at Burri Power Station in Khartoum, one of the targets of the bomb attacks, were arrested on or around 1 July reportedly on suspicion of involvement.

Abdelmahmud Abbo, a leading imam of the Ansar order of Islam, was detained on 6 July following an initial interrogation three days earlier after which he had been ordered to report daily to security headquarters. He has also been detained on many previous occasions, most recently in January 1998 after an outspoken attack on the government.

Another 20 persons said to be detained in connection with the bombings were shown on Sudan television on 6 July. Three reportedly claimed that al-Haj Abdelrahman Abdullah Nugdullah, Abdelmahmud Abbo and other members of the banned Umma party incited them to carry out the attacks. This has been denied by other members of the Umma party.

On 9 July Abdel Aziz Shiddo, the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly, announced that currently banned political parties would not be allowed to organize, despite the new constitution, because of their involvement in terrorist acts. It seems that the authorities may be using the explosions

as an excuse to prevent public activism by political opponents and the open formation of opposition parties.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The Umma party, led by former Prime Minister Sadiq al-Mahdi, was ousted by the military government that brought the current government to power.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of the above men, who may be prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their non-violent opposition to the Sudan Government;
- seeking assurances that the detainees are not being tortured or ill-treated;
- urging that they be given immediate and regular access to their families, legal representatives and any necessary medical attention;
- seeking assurances that they will receive a fair trial in accordance with recognized international standards.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir  
President of the Republic of the Sudan  
People's Palace  
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

**Telegrams: President Lt Gen Omar al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation: Your Excellency**

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin  
Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
Ministry of Justice  
Khartoum, Sudan

**Telegrams: Minister Justice, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Telexes: c/o 22411 KAID SD or 22604 IPOL SD (request them to be forwarded to the Minister)**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
PO Box 873  
Khartoum, Sudan

**Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation: Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Mr Obeid Haj Ali  
Chief Justice  
Supreme Court  
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Ahmad al-Mufti  
Secretary  
Advisory Council for Human Rights  
PO Box 302  
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 1 September 1998.