

UA 84/99

Fear of I**SUDANcase 1: at least 8 men
case 2: 10 people**

Amnesty International is deeply concerned at reports that two courts in Darfur region in western Sudan have recently sentenced at least 18 people to death by hanging, cross amputation (amputation of the right hand and left leg) and crucifixion.

The government-owned newspaper *al-Anbaa* reports that on 14 March 1999 a court in Nyala town sentenced at least eight men to the amputation of their right hands and left legs, followed by death by hanging, for an October 1998 bank robbery. The court reportedly sentenced three other men to jail terms of up to three years and acquitted another.

The daily newspaper *Akhbar al-Youm* reported in mid-April that another court in Darfur region had sentenced 10 people to death followed by crucifixion for involvement in tribal clashes in Darfur in February 1999.

It is unclear what stage these defendants have reached in their appeals, or if these sentences have been approved by the Supreme Court, but the sentences are likely to be carried out very quickly once confirmed, and action to stop them is needed now. It is not known if any such sentences have been carried out in recent years.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Darfur has been the scene of complex intercommunal strife and frequent armed robberies for many years.

On 9 March the director-general of the central prison in Khartoum revealed that there were 85 people on death row in Sudan awaiting review of their sentences by the Supreme Court.

Sudan's penal code, which is based upon the government's interpretation of Shari'a (Islamic) law, includes a number of penalties, such as limb amputation, death and death followed by crucifixion, which Amnesty International regard as cruel, inhuman or degrading punishments and therefore inconsistent with international human rights law and Sudan's obligations, in particular under the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights* (ICCPR) and the *United Nations' Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* (CAT), both of which Sudan has ratified.

Amnesty International is universally opposed to the death penalty and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment and campaigns for the removal of such penalties from all penal codes without exception. The organisation takes no position on the ideological or religious basis of any penal code.

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

- expressing concern that people have been sentenced in Darfur to cross amputation, death by hanging and death followed by crucifixion as reported in Sudanese newspapers;

- explaining that in your view such sentences contravene the prohibition in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of all forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, as well as Sudan's obligations under the ICCPR and CAT;
- appealing for these and all such sentences of death and/or amputation to be commuted immediately;
- appealing for the law in Sudan to be amended to bring it into line with international standards.

APPEALS TO:

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

Telegrams: President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan

Faxes: (249) 11 787 676

Salutation: Your Excellency

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

Telegrams: Justice Minister Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin, Khartoum, Sudan

Faxes: (249) 11 774 063

Salutation: Dear Minister

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

Telegrams: Foreign Minister Mustafa Osman Ismail, Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Hafez al-Sheikh al-Zaki
Chief Justice
Law Courts
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Chief Justice Hafez al-Sheikh al-Zaki

Salutation: Dear Sir

Dr Fathy Khalil
Chair of the National Assembly's Human Rights Committee
Human Rights Committee
National Assembly
Omdurman, Sudan

**Telegrams: Dr Fathy Khalil, Human Rights Committee, National Assembly,
Omdurman, Sudan**

Salutation: Dear Sir

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 2 June 1999.