

UA 375/00

**SUDAN**Ali al Said, Democratic Unionist Party  
Tijani Mustafa, Ba'ath Arab Socialist Party  
Mohamed Mahjoub, Sudan Communist Party  
Joseph Okailo, National Democratic Alliance (NDA)  
Mohamed Wida Ala, NDA Spokesman  
Suleiman Mustafa, Trade Union Alliance  
Stans Jimmy Wongo, Union of Sudan African Parties  
Ibrahim Alha Musa

**Ghazi Suleiman, lawyer, Sudan Human Rights Organisation**  
**Ibrahim Mahmoud Hasanain, lawyer, Democratic Unionist Party**

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Seven leading members of banned political parties and trade unions were arrested on 6 December, during a meeting with an American diplomat. The owner of the house where the meeting was taking place was arrested with them. Two lawyers who protested at the arrests were arrested a few days later. All 10 are held incommunicado, without access to their lawyers, families or medical treatment and their whereabouts are not known. Government opponents are regularly tortured in custody.

The authorities have accused these seven political opponents of plotting an uprising backed by the rebel forces who control southern Sudan, and of passing on information to the rebels, whom they claim are backed by the USA.

The American diplomat, Glenn Warren, was ordered to leave the country on 8 December. By then he had already left.

Lawyers Ghazi Suleiman, a prominent human rights defender, and Ibrahim Mahmoud Hasanain were arrested on 9 December. They had signed a petition protesting at the arrests and vowing to defend the seven, which was sent to the Ministry of Justice. Ghazi Suleiman has said that the meeting had been announced to the authorities and that it was peaceful. They too are detained incommunicado. Ghazi Suleiman's family have not been allowed to see him or pass on medicine for his diabetes. His house and office have been searched. Amnesty International considers that they are prisoners of conscience.

Members of these political parties and trade unions have been targeted by the government in the past. Ghazi Suleiman has been arrested several times for his human rights defence activities, including denouncing arbitrary arrests by the authorities.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Much of southern Sudan is in the hands of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which is fighting the government of President Omar al-Bashir. The Sudanese authorities have repeatedly accused the US of backing the SPLA, and recently complained to the UN Security Council that a senior US State Department official had visited rebel-held southern Sudan without their authorization.

Political opposition and freedom of expression and association have been severely curtailed since President al-Bashir came to power in 1989, and many political parties are now in exile. Presidential and parliamentary elections are due to be held between 13 and 20 December, but the National Democratic

Alliance, a broad political and military alliance between northern exiled political parties and the SPLA, is calling for a boycott.

There has been a pattern of torture and illegal secret detention of suspected government opponents in Sudan. The Political Act, which came into force in January 1999, supposedly relaxed the ban on opposition political parties, but opposition parties and trade unions not linked to the government are still banned. Since December 1999, when the new Security Act and Law Against Terrorism were introduced, and a State of Emergency was declared, the police have been allowed to keep people in custody without charge for up to 63 hours. People charged with "terrorism", which is open to interpretation by the authorities, could face trial by a military court and possible sentences of amputation, the death penalty or life imprisonment.

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

- expressing deep concern for the safety of the 10 men named above, who are detained incommunicado without charge;
- seeking assurances that they are not being tortured or ill-treated and urging the government to reveal publicly where they are detained;
- urging that they be given immediate and regular access to their families, legal representatives and any medical attention they may need;
- calling for them to be released immediately and unconditionally, or else charged with a recognizably criminal offence and tried in accordance with international standards for fair trial and without resorting to the death penalty;
- calling for the immediate and unconditional release of Ghazi Suleiman and Ibrahim Mhamoud Hasanain, whom Amnesty International believes are prisoners of conscience.

**APPEALS TO:**

His Excellency Lieutenant Omar Hassan al-Bashir  
 President of the Republic of Sudan  
 People's Palace  
 PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan  
**Fax: + 24911 787676/783223**  
**Telegrams: President al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation:Your Excellency**

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin  
 Minister of Justice and Attorney General  
 Ministry of Justice  
 Khartoum, Sudan  
**Telegrams: Justice Minister, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation:Dear Minister**

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail  
 Minister of Foreign Affairs  
 Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
 PO Box 873, Khartoum, Sudan  
**Fax: + 24911 779383**  
**Telegrams: Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan**  
**Salutation:Dear Minister**

**COPIES TO:**

Dr Ahmad al-Mufti  
Advisory Council for Human Rights  
PO Box 302  
Khartoum, Sudan  
**Fax: + 24911 779173**

Mr Hafez al-Sheikh al-Zaki  
Chief Justice, Supreme Court  
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 22 January 2001.