

URGENT ACTION

ACADEMIC DETAINED IN SUDAN

On 20 February Professor Mohamed Zain Al-abideen, who holds dual British and Sudanese citizenship, was arrested by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) in the city of Omdurman, Sudan. His arrest took place immediately after the publication of an article in which he criticized Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir. He is being held incommunicado and is at risk of torture and other ill treatment.

Mohamed Zain Al-abideen, the Dean of the College of Higher Education at the University of Al Zaiem Al Azhari in Omdurman, was arrested on 20 February after leaving his office at the university campus. According to sources in Sudan, he was taken to the political wing of the NISS offices in the neighbouring city of Khartoum North. Since then, he has been held incommunicado. He has a number of health problems which require him to take regular medication. His family delivered his medication to the NISS offices where they believe he is still held, but they were not allowed to see him.

Earlier that day an article written by Mohamed Zain Al-abideen, in which he criticized Sudan's President, Omar al-Bashir on the issue of government corruption and nepotism, was published in the daily newspaper *Al Tayar*. That same day, the NISS confiscated printed copies of *Al Tayar*. They suspended publication of the newspaper the following day. It is believed that the action of the NISS against the newspaper was a result of its coverage of corruption.

Please write immediately in English, Arabic or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to release Mohamed Zain Al-abideen immediately and unconditionally, if he is not to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and tried according to international fair trial standards;
- Urging the authorities to ensure that Mohamed Zain Al-abideen is not subjected to torture or otherwise ill treated;
- Calling on the authorities to grant Mohamed Zain Al-abideen immediate access to his lawyer, family and any medical treatment he may require;
- Calling on the Sudanese government to immediately stop the harassment and intimidation of activists and journalists in Sudan, and to respect their right to freedom of expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 5 APRIL 2012 TO:

President

HE Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum
Sudan
Email: info@sudan.gov.sd

Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Mohammed Bushara Dousa
Ministry of Justice,
PO Box 302
Al Nil Avenue,
Khartoum,
Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Interior

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

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The crackdown on freedom of expression in Sudan continues as the authorities attempt to silence dissent and limit access to information. Since early 2011 there have been increased restrictions on freedom of expression imposed by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), which has resulted in confiscations and shutdowns of several newspapers, and the ongoing harassment and intimidation of individuals who speak out against the government through peaceful protests, newspaper articles and social media.

The NISS maintain broad powers of arrest and detention under the 2010 National Security Act, which allows suspects to be detained for up to four and a half months without judicial review. National security officials often use these powers to arbitrarily arrest and detain individuals, and to subject them to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. Under the same Act, NISS agents are provided with protection from prosecution for any act committed in the course of their work, which has resulted in a pervasive culture of impunity.

Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of arbitrary arrest, detention, and torture or other ill-treatment by the NISS.

Name: Mohamed Zain Al-abideen
Gender m/f: Male

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