

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 148/94 Legal concern/fear of ill-treatment and torture 14 April 1994

SUDAN: Sara Nugdallah, opposition politician and lecturer (f)
 Abdel Rasoul al-Nur, opposition politician

Sara Nugdallah and Abdel Rasoul al-Nur, prominent politicians from the banned Umma Party, have been detained in Khartoum, Sudan's capital. Amnesty International believes them to be prisoners of conscience arrested because of their non-violent opposition to the government and fears that they may be subjected to ill-treatment or torture.

Sara Nugdallah, a university lecturer and member of the executive and women's committees of the Umma Party, was arrested on 7 April 1994. She was initially held in the security headquarters but is now believed to be in detention in Omdurman Women's Prison. No official reason has been given for her arrest. She has been arrested on several previous occasions, most recently on 7 March 1994 when she was held for a few hours before being released uncharged.

Abdel Rasoul al-Nur, a former governor of Kordofan region, was detained on 9 April 1994. He was briefly held on 5 April and ordered to report to the security headquarters four days later. Security officials are reported to have returned with him to his home which was searched. Abdel Rasoul al-Nur's whereabouts in detention are unknown. He is thought to be detained in either the security headquarters or a secret detention centre, commonly known as a *ghost house* in Sudan. He has also been arrested on previous occasions, most recently from 5 April to 25 September 1993 when he was held in a *ghost house*.

Anyone detained by the Sudanese security authorities is at risk of ill-treatment, in particular those held in *ghost houses*. Those whom the authorities suspect may have information about opposition activities are at risk of severe torture. In the past the authorities have blamed torture and ill-treatment on undisciplined security officials. Amnesty International's information, however, suggests that torture and ill-treatment remains systematic.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

These two arrests appear to be part of a pattern of harassment of government critics who are known to be devout Muslims. The authorities, who seek to characterise criticisms of the government as attacks on Islam, are particularly sensitive to opposition or criticism from members of Muslim religious orders or banned political parties related to Muslim sects. In recent weeks other members of the Umma Party, which is associated with the Ansar traditional order of Islam in Sudan, have been arrested. Among them was Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of the Umma Party and Sudan's Prime Minister before the 30 June 1989 coup that brought the current government to power, who was briefly detained for questioning on 5 April and again on 7 April. Also briefly arrested on 5 April was Sheikh al-Haddiya, leader of the Ansar al-Sunna order of Islam, another religious order which is critical of the government.

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

- expressing concern at the arrests of Sara Nugdallah and Abdel Rasoul al-Nur whom Amnesty International believes are prisoners of conscience imprisoned for their non-violent opposition to the government;

- seeking public assurances of their safety and guarantees that they are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;
- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released.

APPEALS TO

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General

Omar Hassan al-Bashir

President of the Republic of the Sudan

People's Palace

PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD

Faxes: 249 11 71724

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammad Husayn

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior

People's Palace

PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Brig-Engineer 'Abd al-Rahim Muhammed Husayn, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD

Faxes: 249 11 71724/76554/73046/70186

Salutation: Dear Deputy Prime Minister

3) Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu

Minister of Justice and Attorney-General

Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddu, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Faxes: 249 11 74063

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi

Chief Justice

Law Courts

Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Hussein Suleiman Abu Salih

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PO Box 873

Khartoum, Sudan

Dr A. al-Mufti

Secretary of Human Rights Commission*

Khartoum, Sudan

* The Human Rights Commission is a government-backed body, nominally independent, but apparently created to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda.

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 26 May 1994.