

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 124/95 Fear of torture / Possible prisoners of conscience 2 June 1995

SUDAN
Fadlalla Burma Nasir, former cabinet minister
Ali al-Omda Abdel Magid, former member of parliament
Abdel Nabi Ali Ahmad, former Governor of Darfur
Tebira Idris Habani, former member of parliament
Ali Hassan Taj al-Din, former member of State Supreme Council
Abu Bakr Abdel Magid al-Amir, secretary to former Prime Minister

Hussein Adam Salama, former secretary of the Umma Party headquarters
Abdel Mahmud Abu, an imam of the Ansar religious order
Tirab Tendal, prominent member of the Ansar religious order
Sheik Abdallah Ishaq, imam of the al-Mahdi mosque
Ahmad Musa

The 11 men named above are reported to have been detained in Sudan's capital Khartoum as part of a crackdown on the leadership of the *Ansar*, a traditional order of Sudanese Islam, and the banned Umma Party, which is an associated political party. Amnesty International fears they may be tortured or ill-treated and believes they may be prisoners of conscience.

Abu Bakr Abdel Magid al-Amir was reportedly arrested on 9 May; the others were detained later in the month. Reports indicate that the 11 have been denied access to lawyers and to their families, and that they are being held in Kober prison, the main prison complex in Khartoum, in a wing which has been taken over by the security services. Conditions in the wing are reported to be harsh.

The authorities appear to have recently closed a detention centre, a so-called "ghosthouse", that had come under international scrutiny and to have transferred detainees from there to Kober. Security personnel responsible for political and other detainees have been responsible for ill-treatment and torture.

The detentions appear to be connected to the arrest, on 16 May, of Sadiq al-Mahdi, leader of the *Ansar* order, leader of the Umma Party and Sudan's Prime Minister overthrown in the 1989 coup (see UA 119/95, AFR 54/15/95, 25 May). While the authorities have not yet indicated specifically why the 11 men have been detained they are reported to have announced that Sadiq al-Mahdi is "being interrogated for involvement in subversive activities". The authorities have given contradictory information about these alleged activities; some spokesmen are reported to have accused Sadiq al-Mahdi and the Umma Party of working with the armed opposition Sudan People's Liberation Army.

Independent sources have said that Sadiq al-Mahdi's arrest appears to be a reaction to his outspoken criticism of the legitimacy of Sudan's current rulers on the occasion of the Muslim feast of 'Eid al-Addha on 10 May. The military government, which espouses a radical Islamist ideology, is deeply sensitive to opposition from other interpretations of Islam.

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

- expressing concern at the arrest of the 11 men named above, who Amnesty International believes may be prisoners of conscience, imprisoned on account of their non-violent opposition to government policies;
- seeking assurances of their physical safety and guarantees that they are not being subjected to torture or ill-treatment;

- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless they are charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial;
- calling on the Sudan Government to put a stop to arbitrary detention without charge and to the torture and ill-treatment of individuals suspected of being government opponents.

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 KRID SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Dr al-Tayib Ibrahim Mohamed Kheir

Minister of the Interior

People's Palace

PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Minister of the Interior Dr al-Tayib Ibrahim Mohamed Kheir, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PO Box 873

Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Khartoum, Sudan

Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr 'Abd al-Aziz Shiddo

Minister of Justice and Attorney-General

Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Obeid Haj Ali

Chief Justice

Law Courts

Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Angelo Beda Bambara

Chairman of the Human Rights Committee

of the Transitional National Assembly (TNA)*

Omdurman, Sudan

* The TNA's Human Rights Committee was created by Sudan's government-appointed Transitional National Assembly in December 1992, apparently to counter what the government perceives as hostile human rights propaganda. The Committee's Chairman has said that it investigates reports of human rights violations.

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 17 July 1995.