

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 248/92

Legal concern/Fear of torture

31 July 1992

SUDAN:

**Karabino Majok - student
Dut Col - student
Samuel Major - student
Samuel Lol - student
and one other student whose name is unknown**

Amnesty International has recently learned that the four men named above, all of whom were first year students at the University of Juba now located in Khartoum, are reported to be in incommunicado detention two months after their arrest. One other student, whose name is unknown, is reported to be in detention with them. They were among 32 southern Sudanese students arrested on 27 May 1992. The majority, some of whom had been beaten and ill-treated, were released after a few days. The place of detention of those that are still held is unknown, but is believed to be either the security headquarters in Khartoum or one of the capital's secret detention centres, known in Sudan as "ghost houses". It is feared that they are at risk of torture which is common both at the security headquarters and in "ghost houses".

The arrests followed unrest among first year students at the University of Juba over inadequate living allowances, the lack of accomodation and the use of Arabic as the medium of instruction. On 5 May 1992 a student delegation held a meeting with university officials during which the Vice Chancellor of the university was reported to have been hit by a student. On 7 May 1992 the university dismissed 15 students. Student protests continued, however, and on 21 June 1992 a further seven were dismissed and nine others were suspended for two years. The students who remain in detention are among those that have been dismissed.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The issue of Arabic as the language for teaching in secondary and higher education is politically sensitive in Sudan. Historically, English is the language of government in southern Sudan and is the medium of instruction in most southern educational institutions. Tuition in English is regarded by many southern Sudanese intellectuals as protecting their cultural identity in relation to Muslim northern Sudan. Steps to Arabicize the educational system started in 1991 when the government announced that all school-leavers seeking university places would be required to pass an examination in Arabic. Since 1972 southerners had been exempted from this requirement. Southerners argue that the requirement discriminates against southern students gaining university places, even at the University of Juba, which was set up in the southern Sudan, but which is now located in Khartoum because of the armed conflict in the south.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern about the arrest on 27 May 1992 in Khartoum of University of Juba first year students Karabino Majok, Samuel Major, Dut Col, Samuel Lol and one other;

- expressing concern at their continuing incommunicado detention without charge or trial and fear that they may be being tortured;

Page 2 of UA 248/92

- seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated, and urging that their whereabouts in custody are made public and that they have immediate and regular access to their families, lawyers and any necessary medical attention;

- urging that they be immediately and unconditionally released unless they are to be charged with a recognizably criminal offence and brought promptly to a fair trial.

APPEALS TO:

1) His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Chairman of the National
Salvation Revolutionary Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

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

Telex: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

2) Brigadier-General al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh
Deputy Prime Minister,
Minister of the Interior and Deputy Chairman of the
National Salvation Revolutionary Command Council
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Brig-Gen al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan

Telex: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD

Salutation: Your Excellency

3) Mr Abdullah Idris
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum

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

Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO:

Mr Jalal Ali Lutfi

Chief Justice
Law Courts
Khartoum, Sudan

Mr Ali Sahloul
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO BOX 873, 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 15 September 1992.