

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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UA 428/91 Legal Concern/Torture

6 December 1991

SUDAN Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi - trade unionist
 Muawia Umran - worker
 Abdel Aziz Dafalla - employee of an insurance company
 Abul Hassan

Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi, a foundry worker who is the president of the banned Sudan Mint Workers' trade union, and Mauwia Umran, a worker, were reportedly arrested for political reasons in the third week of November 1991 in Khartoum. Two other men, Abdel Aziz Daffala and Abul Hassan, were reportedly arrested around the same time, apparently in connection with the circulation of opposition pamphlets in Khartoum. All four men are believed to be held without charge or trial in secret detention centres, known in Sudan as "ghost houses".

There is serious concern that Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi, Abdel Aziz Dafalla, Abul Hassan and Muawia Umran are at risk of torture, which is routine in "ghost houses". Amnesty International has been able to confirm the torture in "ghost houses" of more than 60 people arrested since November 1989 by members of a security force known as "the Security of the Revolution". One of their victims, Ali Fadul, a medical doctor, is reported to have died as a result of torture on 22 April 1990 (see UA 164/90, AFR 54/22/90, 25 April 1990). There have been recent reports that prisoners arrested in late August 1991 in connection with an alleged coup attempt were hung by their wrists, routinely whipped and beaten with rubber truncheons.

After the current Sudan Government came to power in a military coup on 30 June 1989, Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi was arrested on 22 November 1989 and held without charge or trial until his release under an amnesty of 300 political prisoners in April 1991.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi

On 30 April 1991 the Sudan Government responded to international criticism of its human rights record by announcing an amnesty for "all political prisoners". This led to the release of 300 prisoners of conscience, many of whom had been detained without charge or trial since shortly after the 30 June 1989 coup. However not all prisoners of conscience and political prisoners were in fact freed. There have also been new arrests of government opponents and a number of those released in the amnesty have since been re-arrested. At least 40 prisoners of conscience remain in prison. In addition large numbers of people have been held incommunicado for short periods of time in "ghost houses" where they have been tortured.

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RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/faxes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the reported arrest of Ali al-Mahi al-Sakhi, Abdel Aziz Dafalla, Abul Hassan and Muawia Umran who Amnesty International believes may be prisoners of conscience;
- expressing concern at reports of their continuing detention without charge or trial in "ghost houses" and fear that they may be being tortured;
- seeking assurances that they are being humanely treated and that they have 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 trial.

APPEALS TO

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

Your Excellency

Telegrams: Lt Gen Omar Hassan al-Bashir, Khartoum, Sudan
Telex: 22385 PEPLC SD or 22411 KAID SD

2) Brigadier-General al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh
Minister, Minister of the Interior
and Deputy Chairman of the NSRCC
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Dear Brigadier-General Deputy Prime

Telegrams: Brig-Gen al-Zubeir Mohamed Saleh, Khartoum, Sudan
Telex: 22842 WZARA SD or 22604 IPOL SD

3) Brigadier Ahmad Mahmoud Hassan
Minister of Justice and Attorney-General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan

Dear Brigadier

Telegrams: Brig Ahmad Mahmoud Hassan, Khartoum, Sudan
Telexes: 22459 KHRJA SD or 22461 KHRJA SD (via Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

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 in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 17 January 1992.