

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)

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Crackdown on Basic Freedoms

28 July 1995

SUDAN

Ahmed Abdalla Akood, former ministry official and
businessman

Recent reports in the Arabic press indicate that the Sudanese authorities have begun a crackdown on information coming into the country. This includes the confiscation of fax and telex machines through which people receive information which the government considers politically sensitive.

In the wave of this crackdown, former ministry official Ahmed Abdalla Akood was reportedly arrested on 16 July 1995, apparently for owning a fax machine. He is said to have been interrogated for a whole day at security headquarters and held since then in Kober prison without charge. His family were reportedly denied access to visit him for the first seven days of his detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

In recent months the Sudanese Government has initiated a general crackdown on political opponents, including the leadership of the *Ansar*, a traditional order of Sudanese Islam, and the banned Umma party, which is an associated political party. Dozens of people have been arrested and held without charge or trial since May, and Amnesty International fears that this new pattern may be part of that crackdown. Many of the detainees are 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.

Independent sources report past and present interference with telecommunications equipment, including fax machines, telephones and typewriters, as an attempt by the Sudanese Government to stifle information flow into and out of the country, as well as between Sudanese themselves.

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

- expressing concern at reports that Ahmed Abdalla Akood was arrested on 16 July 1995 during a crackdown on owners of fax machines in Khartoum and that he is reportedly being held without charge in Kober prison;
- urging that he be immediately and unconditionally released unless he is 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 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 KAID 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**

Salutation: Dear Minister

3) Mr Ali Osman Muhammed Taha
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

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

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

and to diplomatic representatives of Sudan accredited to your country.

* 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.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 8 September 1995.