

# AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

## PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### **Sudanese authorities must end its crackdown on demonstrators and activists**

Amnesty International is concerned at the systematic repression of demonstrations in the last few weeks and calls on the Sudanese authorities to stop the wave of killings, torture, prolonged detention of those arrested during the demonstrations. Harassment against injured demonstrators seeking treatment and medical personnel should also stop.

The Sudanese authorities have routinely used excessive force against mostly peaceful demonstrations which have occurred regularly in Sudan's major cities since mid-June 2012. Police forces used batons, tear gas and rubber bullets at close range against demonstrators in recent weeks.

Sudan's most recent wave of protests broke out on 16 June 2012, when female students at the University of Khartoum staged a demonstration against high prices and the government's policies. The protests spread in the following weeks to other locations in the Khartoum area as well as to provincial cities, including Port Sudan, al-Obeid, Dongola, Atbarah, Kassal and Gedaref.

On 31 July, security services and paramilitary police forces fired live bullets on protesters in Nyala, South Darfur. At least ten students were killed, and dozens were injured. Many of the victims were high-school students.

In response to the protest movement, the NSS arrested hundreds of known political and civil society activists, regardless of their involvement in the protests. Many told Amnesty International they had been tortured with sticks, water hoses and fists, and made to stand under the scorching sun all day.

During the demonstration, protesters threw rocks at the police.

At least 40 people were injured in the clashes, including protesters, policemen and residents. In addition to directly targeting protesters, security forces fired Dushka-type heavy machine-guns in the air, which injured residents in their homes as bullets fell down from the sky.

Security forces involved in the Nyala shootings include the Central Reserve Police – a combat-trained paramilitary police, and plainclothes agents of the National Security Services (NSS).

### **Obstruction to medical care**

Amnesty International has received information indicating that the NSS in recent weeks also prevented injured protesters from receiving medical by deploying agents to public hospitals in the Khartoum area.

A 26-year old man who was tortured while in NSS custody said he had been denied admission at the Royal Care Hospital in Khartoum when he sought medical treatment there immediately after his release on 23 June. Medical personnel reportedly told him the hospital was under orders from the NSS to refuse all protest-related patients and to redirect them to the Khartoum Teaching Hospital.

A security guard in the Omdurman Hospital said that on 29 June he saw NSS agents arresting an injured protester as he exited the hospital after seeking treatment. A doctor said that he saw on the same day NSS agents carrying out visual identity checks at the entrance of the hospital.

Individuals who had been injured in demonstrations or as a result of torture and other ill-treatment in NSS offices told Amnesty International that they had preferred not to seek treatment in hospitals because they feared arrest and intimidation.

The NSS harassed medical personnel who set up mobile clinics in homes to treat injured demonstrators. A female doctor said on 10 July that she was being followed and had received threatening text messages on her phone as a result of her medical work with protesters.

On 31 July, witnesses reported they saw injured protesters being arrested, and NSS officers being deployed within the Nyala General Hospital.

### **Prolonged detention and torture**

Dozens of activists and protesters remain in administrative detention and have now been held for more than a month following their arrest in late June and early July.

Following detention in the offices of the National Security Services, where many have been reportedly tortured or otherwise subject to ill-treatment, they were transferred to large detention centres, such as the Kober prison in Khartoum and the Omdurman prison. Most are being held without charge or have been denied access to a lawyer.

Among them are Khaled Bahar, a leader of the Haq movement, detained since 20 June; Yassir Fathi, a youth leader of the Umma party, in detention since 21 June; Ussamah Mohammed, a youth activist and a blogger arrested on 22 June; Rashida Shams al-Din, an activist with youth movement Girifna, detained since 23 June; Mohammed Salah, a student activist in detention since 24 June; Abdul Hadi Mahmoud, a student activist and Girifna member arrested on 26 June; Amira Osman, a prominent member of the Sudanese Communist Party, detained since 28 June; Mai Ali "Shatta", a Girifna member arrested on 1 July; Naheed Jabralla, the head of SEEMA, a women's and children's rights NGO, arrested on 3 July; Marwa al-Tijani, a journalist detained since 3 July; and Tariq Ibrahim al-Shaikh, a lawyer and a member of the Darfur Bar Association, in detention since 3 July.

In addition, the NSS has brought a court case against Rudwan Dawod, a US resident and Girifna member, and Ahmed Ali "Kawarti", a student activist, on charges of terrorism. The two men were arrested on 3 July as they participated in a protest in the Haj Youssef area of Khartoum; Rudwan Dawod was subsequently tortured while in the custody of the NSS. Under Article 65 of the 1991 Sudanese Criminal Code, they could face the death penalty. Amnesty International considers them to be prisoners of conscience, held solely for the peaceful expression of their belief.

Amnesty International calls on the Sudanese authorities to

- stop using excessive force against protesters and in particular prevent security forces from using live bullets against demonstrators;
- immediately investigate the circumstances surrounding the killing of protesters and the use of force against them and immediately suspend individual members of the security services involved in the events;
- put an end to torture and give clear instructions to security forces to ensure that they respect the right to life and the absolute prohibition of torture and other ill-treatment;
- release protesters and activists who have been detained for prolonged periods or charge them with recognisable criminal offences;

- end the practice of prolonged administrative detention and reform its national law to limit the duration of pre-trial detention.

Ends/