

PUBLIC

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23 December 2003

UA 369/03 Fear for safety/ Fear of torture/ Incommunicado detention

SUDAN **Eisa Mohammed Adam Yaso (m), aged 45, Surveying Engineer working in the Land Administration Department**
Abd el Raouf Abdalla (m), deputy commissioner of the Humanitarian Affairs Commission in Nyala
El Fadil Adam Mohammed Ahmed Noorein (m), aged 30, ex-member of the ruling party National Congress
Mubarak Ali Nooreldin (m), aged 35, member of the Farmers Union executive committee in North Darfur
An unknown number of people arrested in El Fashir

The four men named above were arrested in Darfur, western Sudan on 20 and 21 December. They are detained incommunicado and Amnesty International fears that they may be tortured.

In response to the deteriorating situation in Darfur, where the government forces are fighting with armed opposition groups, the Sudanese security forces have this year detained many members of settled ethnic groups such as the Fur, Zaghawa and Masalit, whom they suspect of supporting the armed opposition. Amnesty International has received an increasing number of reports of these people being tortured.

Eisa Mohammed Adam Yaso and Abd el Raouf Abdalla were arrested by the National Security Forces in Nyala, capital of South Darfur state, on 20 December. El Fadil Adam Mohammed Ahmed Noorein was arrested the following day. All are members of the Fur ethnic group. All three are thought to be detained in the offices of the National Security Forces in Nyala, but no-one has had access to them since their arrest.

Mubarak Ali Nooreldin, member of the Zaghawa ethnic group, was arrested on 20 or 21 December in El Fashir, capital of North Darfur state, together with an unknown number of other people. All are reportedly detained at the premises of the National Security Forces in El Fashir, where they are reportedly being beaten. However no-one has had access to them since their arrest.

No reason has been given for the arrest of these men, and no charges are known to have been brought against them. However they may be detained on suspicion of supporting the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA), an armed opposition group composed of members of the Zaghawa, Fur and Masalit ethnic groups, operating in Darfur. El Fadil Mohammed Ahmed Noorein was previously arrested and detained at the security forces office in Nyala, from 15 July to September 2003, reportedly on suspicion of supporting the SLA. He was allegedly ill-treated in detention.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The SLA took up arms against the government in February 2003, because of what they perceive as the lack of government protection of their people and the marginalisation and underdevelopment of the region.

Since then, conflict has intensified in Darfur. Rural villages and towns have been attacked during the fighting between the Sudanese government and armed opposition groups. A government-aligned militia, The *Janjawid*, composed of nomads and reportedly including bandits, have attacked villages, killing hundreds of people, destroying homes and crops and looting or killing livestock. The humanitarian situation is dire. More than 600,000 civilians are said to have been displaced by the conflict and several thousand have crossed the border into Chad. Humanitarian access to the displaced has been limited because of the lack of security and

government restrictions on the movements of aid organizations in the region. On 9 December, United Nations Secretary General Kofi Annan expressed concern at the humanitarian situation of up to one million people in Darfur.

Many of those detained in Darfur before September 2003 were released under the terms of a ceasefire between the SLA and the government, sponsored by the Chadian authorities. However on 17 December, negotiations in Chad to end the conflict in Darfur collapsed. Since then, the local authorities have imposed a curfew in El Fashir, Nyala and Geneina, the capitals of North, South and West Darfur.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible, in Arabic, English or your own language:

- expressing concern for the safety of the four men named above, and an unknown number of others, detained incommunicado in Nyala and El Fashir;
- calling on the authorities to give assurances that they will not be tortured or otherwise ill-treated and urging them to publicly reveal their whereabouts;
- calling on the government to allow them immediate access to their families, legal counsel and any medical care they may need;
- calling on the government to abide by its commitments under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and either charge them with a recognizably criminal offence and bring them to justice in accordance with international standards for fair trials, or release them immediately;
- calling on the Sudanese government not to respond to the conflict in Darfur by violating international human rights and humanitarian law.

APPEALS TO:

Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha

First Vice-President

People's Palace, PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegram: First Vice-President, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 771025

Salutation: Your Excellency

Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin

Minister of Justice and Attorney General

Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan

Telegrams: Justice Minister, Khartoum, Sudan

Fax: + 249 11 770883

Salutation: Dear Minister

Mr Osman Mohamed Yusif Kubor
Governor of North Darfur
People's Palace, PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Governor of North Darfur, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 731 42696 (please keep trying)
Salutation: Dear Governor

Lieutenant-General Adam Hamid Musa
Governor of South Darfur State
c/o People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan
Telegrams: Governor of South Darfur, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax: + 249 11 771 024
Salutation: Dear Sir

COPIES TO:

Dr Hamadtu Mukhtar
Chair of the Human Rights Committee
National Assembly

Fax: + 249 15 650 950

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 3 February 2004.