

The Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders, a joint programme of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) and the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), requests your urgent intervention in the following situation in Sudan.

Brief description of the situation:

The Observatory has been informed by the Sudan Organization Against Torture (SOAT), that **Mr. Aba Zer Ahmed Abu Al Bashir**, a lawyer and human rights defender, was arrested by the security forces from his office in Nyala on July 24, 2004.

Mr. Aba Zer was arrested after the submission eight days earlier of a written request to the Governor of Southern Darfur state to put an end to the conflict in the state. Ten other peace activists and tribal leaders in Southern Darfur who were party to the request were also recently arrested in separate locations. Mr. Aba Zer is currently being detained at the security Offices in Nyala with no official charges against him. He has been denied any visits.

The Observatory is concerned that Mr. Aba is being detained solely for the peaceful expression of his opinions and human rights activities.

In recent months there has been an increase in the number of human rights defenders and activists being targeted and subjected to arbitrary arrest and detention by the security forces, especially in Darfur. On June 16, 2004, Mr. Adel Abdullah Nasir Aldeain Saeed, a lawyer with SOAT network in Nyala, was arrested by the security forces from his office. Mr. Adel remains in detention, and he has not been charged with any offence. (see Observatory Urgent Appeal SDN 005 / 0604 / OBS 047).

Also, on 5 May 2004, security forces in Zalingy arrested and detained Osman Adam Abdel Mawla, a human rights activist working for Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO), Nyala branch, a locally registered Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO). (See Observatory Urgent Appeal SDN 003 / 0504 / OBS 035).

The Observatory is deeply concerned by these arbitrary arrests of human rights defenders and urges Sudan to comply with the Declaration on Humans Rights Defenders, adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on December 9, 1998, in particular articles 5.c which provides that “everybody has the right [...] to communicate with non-governmental and intergovernmental organisations” and 8.2 which provides that everyone has “the right, individually and in association with others, to submit to governmental bodies and agencies and organizations concerned with public affairs criticism and proposals for improving their functioning and to draw attention to any aspect of their work that may hinder or impede the promotion, protection and realization of human rights and fundamental freedoms.”

Actions requested:

Please write to the Sudanese authorities and ask them to:

- i. Take all necessary measures to ensure the physical and psychological integrity of Mr. Aba Zer Ahmed Abu Al Bashir.
- ii. To allow him immediate and unrestricted access to legal council, to his family and any medical treatment that he may need

- ii. In the absence of valid legal charges, to order the immediate release of Mr. Aba Zer Ahmed Abu Al Bashir and others in arbitrary detention, or if legitimate charges exist, bring them before an impartial tribunal and guarantee procedural rights at all times.
- iv. Guarantee the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in Sudan, including the freedom of association in accordance with national laws and international human rights standards.

Addresses:

- His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir, President of the Republic of Sudan, People's Palace, PO Box 281, Khartoum, Sudan, fax : + 249 11 783223
- Mr Ali Osman Yasin, Minister of Justice and Attorney General, Ministry of Justice, Khartoum, Sudan. Fax : + 249 11 788941
- Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, PO Box 873, Khartoum, Sudan, fax : + 249 11 779383
- Dr. Abdelmuneim Osman Mohamed Taha, Advisory Council for Human Rights, PO Box 302 Khartoum, Sudan. Fax: + 249 11 770883
- His Excellency Ambassador Mr. Mohamed Al- Hassan Ahmed Al-Haj, Permanent Mission of Sudan to the United Nations in Geneva, Case Postal 335, 1211 Geneva 19, fax : 0041 (0) 22 731 26 56, email: mission.sudan@ties.itu.int.

Paris – Geneva, July 30, 2004

Kindly inform us of any action undertaken quoting the code of this appeal in your reply.

The Observatory, a FIDH and OMCT venture, is dedicated to the protection of Human Rights Defenders and aims to offer them concrete support in their time of need.

The Observatory was the winner of the 1998 Human Rights Prize of the French Republic.

To contact the Observatory, call the emergency line:

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