

URGENT ACTION

WHEREABOUTS OF DARFURI STUDENTS UNKNOWN

Eight students from the Holy Quran University in Omdurman, Sudan were arrested by the National Intelligence Security Service (NISS) on 14 November. Their whereabouts remain unknown and they may be at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Eight students from the Holy Quran University, among them four members of the Darfur students Association executive committee, were arrested by the NISS on 14 November in Omdurman, Sudan. The four student leaders are: **Naser Aldeen Mukhtar Mohamed Abdalla**, 2nd year student, the chairperson; **Ahmed Abdel Lateef Al Syadi**, 4th year student, deputy chairperson; **Mosaab Osman Al Amodi**, 2nd year student, member, and **Abdel Hakeem Abdalla Mahmoud Ishaq**, 4th year student, member. The other four students arrested are: **Mohamed Ali, Zyriab Mohamed, Al Tyeb Ibrahim and Nabeil Suliman**.

The eight students are part of a group of Darfuri students who participated in a peaceful sit-in at the Holy Quran University on 25 and 26 October, protesting against the university's decision to suspend the exemption of new Darfuri students from tuition fees payment. The police and NISS security agents, accompanied by student supporters of the ruling National Congress Party (NCP) dispersed the students' sit-in. Some of the student protestors sustained injuries as the police used teargas and riot batons to disperse them.

This is not the first group among those who participated in the protest to get arrested. On 26 October, nine students who participated in the same sit-in were arrested by the police and charged with participating in a 'riot', causing 'disturbance of public peace' and 'public nuisance' under articles 68/69/77 of the 1991 Criminal Act. They were released on bail after three days in detention. The trial against this group of Darfuri students began on 1 November at the Criminal Court of North Omdurman. If found guilty, they may face imprisonment and flogging.

Till now the whereabouts of the eight Darfuri students remain unknown after they were taken by the NISS officers on 14 November. They are at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

Please write immediately in Arabic, English or your own language:

- Calling on the authorities to reveal the whereabouts of the eight students immediately;
- Urging authorities to ensure that they are not subjected to torture or any ill-treatment if they are in state custody;
- Urging the authorities, if they are in state custody, to either charge them with an internationally recognizable offence or immediately release them;
- Calling on the authorities to give them access to doctors and health care, to lawyers of their own choosing and allow them visits from their families.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 29 DECEMBER 2015 TO:

President

HE Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan
Email: info@presidency.gov.sd
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister of Justice

Awad Al Hassan Alnour
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302
Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum, Sudan
Email: moj@moj.gov.sd
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Interior

Ismat Abdul-Rahman Zain Al-Abdin
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country. Please insert local diplomatic addresses below:

Name Address 1 Address 2 Address 3 Fax Fax number Email Email address Salutation Salutation

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Amnesty International has received numerous reports of intensified NISS and police crackdown on activities of students from Darfur. The NISS maintains broad powers of arrest and detention under the National Security Act 2010, which allows suspects to be detained for up to four-and-a-half months without judicial review. NISS officials often use these powers to arbitrarily arrest and detain individuals, and to subject them to torture and other forms of ill-treatment. Under the same Act, NISS agents are provided with protection from prosecution for any act committed in the course of their work, which has resulted in a pervasive culture of impunity. The constitutional amendments passed by Parliament on 5 January 2015, have exacerbated the situation. The constitutional amendments accorded sweeping powers to the NISS which now has unlimited discretion to interfere in political, economic and social issues.

A Presidential Decree in 2006 based on the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA) emphasizes the "Exemption from the payment of school fees for new students of Darfurian origin at all levels." Similarly, article 14 of the Doha Document for Peace in Darfur (DDPD) in 2011 states that: "All students who are the off springs of IDPs and refugees from Darfur States duly admitted by the admission committee to national universities shall be exempted from educational fees for 5 years."

Despite the provisions in these agreements, almost all universities in Sudan are faced with an annual crisis concerning students from Darfur and the payment of their tuition fees. The universities tend to suspend Darfuri students from studying, ban them from sitting for exams or deny them their certificates after graduation for lack of tuition payment. Darfur Students Association protests against this by organizing peaceful sit-ins, picketing and holding public events to address the crisis. In many occasions, such peaceful actions are met with brutal repression by the NISS, the police in close coordination with pro-government supporters in the universities. The government illegally uses pro-government supporters, as well as the police and other security forces to control and attack the students during such peaceful protests a clear violation of their rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly. In recent years, the students have been subjected to arbitrary arrests, torture and harassment.

Holy Quran University administration and the ministry of interior issued statements, on 12 November, blaming Darfuri students for setting the fire that destroyed many offices in the administration block of the Holy Quran University on 11 November. The Darfur Students Association denied this allegation in a statement issued on 15 November. They further accuse the government of, "systematic targeting of Darfuri students to prevent them from their legitimate rights to education."

Name: Naser Aldeen Mukhtar Mohamed Abdalla, Ahmed Abdel Lateef Al Syadi, Mosaab Osman Al Amodi, Abdel Hakeem Abdalla Mahmoud Ishaq, Mohamed Ali, Zyriab Mohamed, Al Tyeb Ibrahim; and Nabeil Suliman.

Gender m/f: m

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