

URGENT ACTION

14 WOMEN RELEASED, 20 STILL DETAINED IN SUDAN

Fourteen women held in El Obeid Prison, in Sudan's Northern Kordofan State, were released on 26 April, but have been told that they may be charged in the future. However 20 other women, who have been arbitrarily detained in the same facility since 12 November 2012, continue to be held in El Obeid prison, without charge or access to a lawyer.

A total of 34 women from Kadugli, the capital of Sudan's Southern Kordofan State, were arbitrarily arrested on 12 November 2012; however 14 were released on 26 April 2013. It is believed that five of those who were released had been detained with their young children ranging in age from six months to 18 months, while the other nine had suffered from health problems while in detention. None of the women have been charged with a crime or were given access to lawyers or medical care.

The 14 women were released on bail, but reportedly told that if Kadugli was attacked by the armed opposition group, the Sudan Peoples Liberation Army-North (SPLA-N), or if they moved outside of the area without authorization of the security committee set up to monitor their case, they could face re-arrest and charges. The women were told they could face six charges under Sudan's 1991 Criminal Code, including committing Murder, under Article 130, and Punishment for Causing Injury Intentionally, under Article 139. The women and members of their families were made to sign documents prior to their release to undertake to comply with the restrictions imposed on their freedom of movement.

The 20 women still detained without charge in El Obeid prison do not have access to lawyers, or any medical care they may require.

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

- Calling on the Sudanese government to immediately release the 20 women still detained if they are not to be charged with an internationally recognized criminal offence and remanded by an independent court;
- Calling on the Sudanese authorities to immediately grant the 20 women in detention access to a lawyer and any medical assistance they may require;
- Expressing concern that arbitrary restrictions have been placed on the 14 women who were released, who have not been charged with an offence.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 26 JULY 2013 TO:

President

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

Minister of Justice

Mohamed Bushara Dousa
Ministry of Justice,
PO Box 302
Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Your Excellency

And copies to:

Minister of Interior
Ibrahim Mohamed Ahmed
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Your Excellency

Also send copies to diplomatic representatives accredited to your country.

Please check with your section office if sending appeals after the above date. This is the first update of UA 46/13. Further information:

<http://amnesty.org/en/library/info/AFR54/005/2013/en>

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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Following the release of the 14 women, a number of the women that remain detained went on hunger strike in protest at their detention. The hunger strike ended on 2 June 2013, when the last woman chose to end her hunger strike.

The women are from the Nuba community in Southern Kordofan State, and were accused of spying for the political arm of the SPLA-N, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement-North (SPLM-N). Under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and Article 6 of the African Charter, Sudan is obliged to refrain from arbitrarily depriving persons of their liberty.

Conflict between the Sudan People's Liberation Army-North and the Sudanese Armed Forces, erupted in Southern Kordofan State on 5 June 2011, and quickly spread to Blue Nile State on 1 September 2011. Indiscriminate aerial bombardments by the Sudanese Armed Forces on SPLM-N controlled areas, coupled with the blocking of humanitarian assistance to the conflict-affected areas since the conflict began, has led to deaths and injuries of civilians, looting, and the destruction of property. Tens of thousands of people are being driven from their homes, with over 200,000 refugees currently in Ethiopia and South Sudan.

Arrests and detention of suspected members and supporters of the SPLM-N, have been widespread since the conflict began in Southern Kordofan. In September 2011, the Government of Sudan declared the SPLM-N a banned opposition group, and has used this as grounds to continue arresting individuals. As far as Amnesty International is aware many of those arrested on the basis of their alleged membership of or connection with SPLM-N have not committed any recognised criminal offence.

Name: 20 women held in El Obeid prison; and 14 women released on conditional charges in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan State

Gender m/f: Female

Further information on UA: 46/13 Index: AFR 54/012/2013 Issue Date: 14 June 2013