



For immediate release – 18 November 2009

PRESS RELEASE

**Sudan: ARTICLE 19 Supports Human Rights Defenders’
Quest for Justice**

ARTICLE 19 pledges its support to three Sudanese human rights defenders who have submitted an application to the African Commission on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR) seeking justice for their unconstitutional detention in November 2008.

Journalist and chairman of the Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development (KCHRED), Amir Suliman, and his colleagues Osman Hummeida and Monim Elgak are heavily involved in the human rights movement in Sudan and support the work of the International Criminal Court. They were detained by the National Intelligence and Security Services on 24 November 2008 and beaten while in custody. Their arrest and ill-treatment is consistent with the ongoing suppression of dissent and censorship of the press in Sudan.

ARTICLE 19 has worked closely with KCHRED since 2003 to promote freedom of expression in Sudan. KCHRED has become known as an outspoken voice on human rights issues and was shut down by government authorities in March 2009.

The application to the ACHPR states that the detention and ill-treatment of Suliman, Hummeida and Elgak is irreconcilable with the rights enshrined under Article 39 of the Sudanese Constitution. The application also calls for reform of the Sudanese National Security Act, which permits pre-trial detention and puts detainees at risk of torture. The application asserts that the Act contravenes both the Sudanese Constitution and also Articles 1, 5, 6 and 7 of the African Charter, to which Sudan is a signatory.

“KCHRED’s application is key to the human rights movement in Sudan,” says Dr Agnès Callamard, ARTICLE 19 Executive Director. “These three human rights defenders are not only seeking redress for their own mistreatment by the state, but also reform of the draconian security legislation. The National Security Act is used as a tool for legitimising the intimidation and abuse of journalists and human rights defenders such as KCHRED.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- For more information please contact: Roxanne Abdulali, Africa Programme Officer, roxanne@article19.org, +254 20 3862230

- The previous ARTICLE 19 release on this case can be found here: <http://www.article19.org/pdfs/press/sudan-urgent-action-required-from-governments-and-stakeholders-to-help-mitig.pdf>
- ARTICLE 19 is an independent human rights organisation that works around the world to protect and promote the right to freedom of expression. It takes its name from Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which guarantees free speech.