

URGENT ACTION

DOCTOR RISKS ILL-TREATMENT IN DETENTION

Dr. Mohamed Yasin Abdalla, the chairperson of the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors (CCSD), was arrested on 22 April in Khartoum by National Intelligence Service (NISS) agents. He is currently being held without charge at the office of the NISS Prosecutor of Crimes against the State in Khartoum. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment while in detention.

Dr. Mohamed Yasin Abdalla, one of the founders and current chairperson of the Central Committee of Sudanese Doctors (CCSD), was arrested on 22 April from his residence in Khartoum. He was among 28 Sudanese medical doctors who were arrested multiple times and released in October and November 2016. Dr. Mohamed Yasin Abdalla and his colleagues were accused, but not formally charged, of forming an illegal entity and threatening the health system of the country.

The doctors had, at the time of their arrests, participated in a doctors' strike organized by CCSD. The CCSD is an independent doctors' association that was formed as an alternative to the pro-government Sudanese Doctors Union (SDU). The key demands during the strike were, among other things, the provision of free treatment for those critically ill and for children under five years; provision of suitable accident and emergency medical equipment in 22 hospitals.

Amnesty International previously documented the experiences of people held at this specific office where people usually detained in a 4 by 5 meter cell with 25 to 30 other detainees. The cell lacked ventilation and there were no lights at night. The detainees were usually kept in their cell for 24 hours a day, fed two meals a day and only allowed to visit the bathroom twice a day. Although the NISS Prosecutor of Crimes against the State detention facilities are publicly acknowledged but its legal status remains ambiguous and not in accord with the law that regulate detention facilities in Sudan. Dr. Mohamed Yasin Abdalla is at risk of similar treatment while in detention.

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

- Urging the Sudanese authorities to immediately release Dr. Mohamed Yasin Abdalla or charge him with a recognizable criminal offence, in line with Sudan's international obligations;
- Urging them to ensure that he is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Calling on them to ensure Dr. Mohamed Yasin Abdalla is granted regular access to his family, medical treatment and a lawyer of his choice;
- Urging them to comply with their obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) particularly the obligations to respect, protect, promote and fulfil the rights to freedom of association and expression.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 8 JUNE 2017 TO:

President

HE Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan
Salutation: Your Excellency

Minister for Justice

Awad Al Hassan Alnour
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302
Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum, Sudan
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. HIS EXCELLENCY MR MOHAMMED ABDALLA ALI ELTOM
Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan, 3 Cleveland Row St James's SW1A 1DD, 020 7839 8080, info@sudan-embassy.co.uk

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

**AMNESTY
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The CCSD announced the first doctors' strike on 6 October 2016. The strike lasted for eight days. The key demands during the strike were, among other things, the provision of free treatment for those critically ill and for children under five years; provision of suitable accident and emergency medical equipment in 22 hospitals; a presidential decree to implement the Civil Service Law that protects doctors as civil servants; and a presidential decree to enact a law to protect doctors and medical professionals while exercising their duty.

The doctors suspended the strike on 13 October 2016 for one week after meeting with the Vice-President and the Minister for Health. The government agreed to fulfil the doctors' demands. The CCSD, on 27 October 2016, called on the doctors to resume the strike as the government failed to implement its commitments. The strike resumed on 1 November 2016.

The NISS arrested 28 medical doctors in Khartoum and in six other states across the country on 29 October 2016. They were questioned for several hours about their role and activities in relation to the strike and their political affiliations. They were released on the same day on condition that they would report to the NISS office next day. Ten of these doctors were re-arrested by the NISS between 30 October and 22 November 2016.

The former chairperson of CCSD, Dr Hassan Karar, was arrested on 20 April 2017 and detained for four days at the office of the NISS Prosecutor of Crimes against the State. He was released on 24 April 2017 after the NISS charged him with abetment; dissemination of false information; stirring riot; public nuisance and forgery. The punishment for these crimes range from imprisonment of six months to ten years in addition to flogging.

Amnesty International has received numerous reports of an intensified NISS crackdown on the activities of political, students, civil society and trade union activists. The NISS maintains broad powers of arrest and detention under the National Security Act 2010 (NSA), 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, many of whom are then subjected to torture or other 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 amendment to Article 151 (NSA) passed on 5 January 2015 that expanded the mandate of the NISS has exacerbated the situation. The amendment transformed the NISS from an intelligence agency focused on information gathering, analysis and advice, to a fully-fledged security agency with a broad mandate to exercise a mix of functions usually carried out by the armed forces or law enforcement agencies. It gave the NISS unlimited discretion to decide what constitutes a political, economic or social threat and how to respond to such threats. Neither the NSA nor the revised Article 151 explicitly or implicitly require the NISS to abide by relevant international, regional and domestic law in the operation of its duties.

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