

URGENT ACTION

RELIGIOUS TEACHER ARBITRARILY DETAINED

Matar Younis Ali Hussein, a visually impaired religious teacher, was arrested by the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) in Zalingei city, Central Darfur State on 1 April. He is currently being held at the NISS detention centre at Kober Prison in Khartoum and has been denied access to a lawyer and his family. Matar Younis has been a vocal critic of the government's policy in Darfur. He is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment while in detention.

Matar Younis Ali Hussein is a 48-year-old visually impaired religious teacher at the Mosque of Zalingei and father of eight. NISS arrested him on 1 April and detained him in Zalingei city, Central Darfur State before transferring him to the NISS detention centre at Kober Prison in Khartoum a few days later.

His family was denied access to him when he was first detained in Zalingei city. They still have not been able to visit him in Khartoum. Matar Younis has also been denied access to a lawyer. Former detainees, who met him at Kober Prison, told Amnesty International that he has not been charged and the prison authorities refused to provide him with a walking cane to aid in his movement in prison. Amnesty International is concerned that Matar Younis' continued arbitrary detention puts him at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

Matar Younis has been a vocal critic of the government's policy in Darfur. In the recent past, he publicly called out the government for hiring thousands of young people in Darfur to join the army and also for distributing weapons in the region. He has also described the peace process in Darfur as 'false peace' and called for the protection of displaced people in Darfur.

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

- Calling on the Sudanese authorities to release Matar Younis Ali Hussein immediately and unconditionally as he is a prisoner of conscience, detained solely for peacefully exercising his right to freedom of expression;
- Urging them to ensure that, pending his release, he is not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment while in detention;
- Calling on them to ensure that, pending his release, Matar Younis Ali Hussein is granted regular access to his family and a lawyer of his choice.
- Calling on them to either charge all other detainees from Darfur with recognizable criminal offences or immediately release them;

PLEASE SEND APPEALS BEFORE 30 MAY 2018 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

Idris Ibrahim Jameel
Ministry of Justice
PO Box 302
Al Nil Avenue
Khartoum, Sudan

Salutation: Your Excellency

:

And copies to

Minister for Interior

Hamed al-Mannan
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
INTERNATIONAL**



URGENT ACTION

RELIGIOUS TEACHER ARBITRARILY DETAINED

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

As of today, according to the UN, the overall security situation in Darfur is still volatile due to the growing number of pro-government armed groups and unknown armed groups in the region in addition to the lack of tangible progress in the peace process to address the causes and consequences of the conflict. There are widespread incidents of unlawful killings against internally displaced persons (IDPs), and other civilians, abduction, looting, rape and arbitrary arrests.

Despite this, the government of Sudan continues to claim that the security situation in Darfur has improved and the area “stable”. From November 2017 to March 2018, a mass displacement of people was caused by the internal fighting within the Sudan Liberation Army – Abdel Wahid (SLA-AW) in East Jebel Marra and between SLA-AW and Government of Sudan forces.

Arbitrary arrests and detention, as well as torture and other ill-treatment, are pervasive in Darfur. It is a repressive measure regularly employed by the Sudanese authorities to silence dissent and punish anti-government political activists, human rights defenders, civil society activists and IDP communities in Darfur on the basis of the peaceful exercise of their right to freedom of expression and assembly. The rights to freedom of expression, association and peaceful assembly are heavily restricted in Darfur. In addition to the arbitrary arrest and detention of Matar Younis Ali Hussein, Amnesty International has received credible reports confirming that there are dozens of detainees from Darfur still in custody under harsh conditions without being charged or tried.

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 and 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.