



Middle East Studies Association of North America

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November 20, 1990

His Excellency Lieutenant General Omar Hassan al-Bashir
Head of State and Defense Minister
People's Palace, POB 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Your Excellency:

The Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association wrote to you on 21 June 1990 concerning the detention of leading professionals in the Sudan. The Middle East Studies Association comprises 2200 academics worldwide who teach and conduct research on the Middle East and North Africa. The Association publishes the respected *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. The Association is committed to ensuring respect for academic freedom throughout the region. A copy of our letter is attached.

We have been relieved to learn that Dr. Ali Abdallah Abbas, Dr. Mohammad Sayid al-Gadal, Dr. Bashir Omer, and Dr. Mohammad Rajab have been released from detention. However, we are disturbed to learn that several of them have been unable to obtain exit visas in order to travel abroad for academic or medical purposes. We understand, for example, that Dr. Mohammad Sayid al-Galal suffered hemorrhaging in his eyes due to his diabetic condition, while he was detained in Port Sudan Prison, and has still not obtained permission to travel abroad for vital medical treatment.

We remain concerned about the continued detention of other prominent academics and professionals, including the detention in Kober Prison since May 1990 of Dr. Osama Abdel Rahman al-Nur, Director-General of Antiquities and National Museums, and Dr. Muhammad Hassan Basha, Assistant Director of the Sudan National Museum. We are particularly disturbed by the apparent attempt to intimidate Dr. Ushari Ahmad Mahmoud. We understand that a government minister visited him in Kober Prison on 18 March 1990 and threatened him with indefinite detention if he did not retract in writing his report on the killing of Dinka tribespeople in al- Da'ien by Rizeiqat murahaleen. When he refused to retract his report, he was transferred to Shalla Prison, where conditions are especially harsh. We are also concerned that Dr. Faruq Kadudah and Dr. Khalid al-Kid are still held in Shalla Prison, despite the inadequate facilities there.

We have learned that agriculturalists Dr. Abdin Mohammad Zein al-Abdin and Dr. Kamil Ibrahim were held during June on the roof of the security headquarters in Khartoum, with no protection against the sun, and that, as a result, they both collapsed and had to be taken

to the military hospital. Denial of medical care and detention under harsh conditions constitute serious violations of human rights standards.

Finally, we are concerned that Khartoum University was closed indefinitely on September 6 as a result of a student strike and disturbances on the campus. As the leading institution of higher education in the Sudan, the university performs a vital function.

We respectfully request that your government publicly clarify information on the well-being of these scholars and present any evidence to suggest that they have committed an offence that is recognizably criminal according to international standards. In the absence of such evidence, we urge that they be immediately released. We urge your government to allow the detainees regular access to family visits and legal representation, and we ask for assurances of their access to medical care. We also urge that the University of Khartoum be reopened promptly.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to your response.

Respectfully,

Anne H. Betteridge
Executive Director

cc: His Excellency Brigadier-General Mohamed Saleh al-Zubeir, National Salvation
Revolution Command
Ambassador Abdalla Ahmed Abdalla, Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan
Ambassador James Cheek, Embassy of the United States of America
Mr. Jeff Lumstead, Sudan Desk, US Department of State
Mr. Steven Morrison, Africa Subcommittee, House Committee on International
Relations