22 April 2003

UA 109/03 Fear of torture or ill-treatment/incommunicado detention/ detention without charge/ possible prisoners of conscience

SUDAN:
Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan (m), aged 41, journalist, member of the Arab Ba’ath Socialist Party

Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan, a member of the Sudanese Arab Ba’ath Socialist Party, is being detained incommunicado at an unknown location and has reportedly been tortured. Amnesty International fears that he may be detained solely on account of his political affiliation, and he may therefore be a prisoner of conscience.

Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan, an occasional journalist for the newspaper *Al-Ayam* (The Days), was arrested at his home by national security personnel at 2.30pm on 22 March and taken to an unknown place of detention. He has been held incommunicado since his arrest and has reportedly been tortured in detention. He has not been charged with any offence.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION
The Arab Ba’ath Socialist Party split from the pro-Iraq Ba’ath Party in Sudan four years ago. The Arab Ba’ath Socialist Party is considered the fourth member of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), the main opposition coalition in the Sudan, which has been engaged in armed opposition to the government of President Lieutenant-General Omer al-Bashir in the eastern Sudan.

Political opposition and freedom of expression, assembly and association are still severely curtailed for a number of opposition groups, particularly those with relations with the NDA. Under the State of Emergency Act and the National Security Forces Act, the security services can hold people in incommunicado detention without access to judicial review for up to nine months.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send appeals to arrive as quickly as possible:
- expressing grave concern for the safety of Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan, detained on 22 March, and still without access;
- calling on the authorities to immediately reveal the whereabouts of Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan and to give assurances that he will not be tortured or ill-treated;
- calling on the authorities to investigate reports that Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan was tortured, to compensate him if this is found to be true and to bring anyone found to have used violence against him to justice;
- urging the authorities to allow Fathi Mohammad al-Hassan immediate and unrestricted access to his relatives, legal counsel and any medical treatment he may need;
- calling on the authorities to abide by their commitments under Article 9 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) to either charge the detainee with a recognizably criminal offence and give him a prompt and fair trial in accordance with international standards, or to set him free immediately.

Amnesty International’s mission is to undertake research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.
APPEALS TO:
Mr Ali Mohamed Osman Yassin
Minister of Justice and Attorney General
Ministry of Justice
Khartoum, Sudan
Telegram:  Justice Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax:  011 249 11 799031
Salutation:  Dear Minister

Major General Abdul-Rahim Muhammed Hussein
Minister of Internal Affairs
Ministry of Interior
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan
Telegram:  Minister of Internal Affairs, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax :  011 249 11 773046
Salutation:  Dear Minister

Mr Mustafa Osman Ismail
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
PO Box 873
Khartoum, Sudan
Telegram:  Foreign Minister, Khartoum, Sudan
Fax:  011 249 11 779383
Salutation:  Dear Minister

COPIES TO:
Dr Yasir Sid Ahmed
Advisory Council for Human Rights
PO Box 302
Khartoum, Sudan
Fax:  011 249 11 779173 / 770883

Ambassador H.E. Khidir Haroun Ahmed
Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan
2210 Massachusetts Ave. NW
Washington DC 20008
Fax: 1 202 667 2406
Email: kahmed@sudanembassy.org

Please send appeals immediately. Check with the Colorado office between 9:00 am and 6:00 pm, Mountain Time, weekdays only, if sending appeals after June 3, 2003.