

URGENT ACTION

FORTY-SEVEN STUDENTS HELD INCOMMUNICADO, ONE KILLED

Forty-seven students of Darfur origin remain in incommunicado detention after security agents arrested them in raids on their homes on 23 and 27 December 2018 in Sinnar and Khartoum states. One student was killed in the raids. In press conferences on 23 and 28 December 2018, the government accused the students of infiltration, association with a rebel group, and planning to kill protesters in the ongoing protests in the country.

TAKE ACTION:

1. Write a letter in your own words or using the sample below as a guide to one or both government officials listed. You can also email, fax, call or Tweet them.
2. [Click here](#) to let us know the actions you took on **Urgent Action 9.19**. It's important to report because we share the total number with the officials we are trying to persuade and the people we are trying to help.

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

Ambassador Maowia Osman Khalid
Embassy of the Republic of Sudan
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Salutation: Dear Ambassador

Your Excellency President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir,

Amnesty International is concerned with the arbitrary arrest and continued incommunicado detention of 47 students of Darfur origin who were arrested in three raids on their homes in Sinnar and Khartoum states on 23 and 27 December 2018. One student, Salih Yagoub Omer, was killed during the raids.

In press conferences on 23 and 28 December 2018, the government accused the students of infiltration, association with a rebel group, and of planning to kill protesters in the ongoing protests in the country. At each of the press conferences on national television, videos were aired showing the students allegedly incriminating themselves as being associated with the Sudan Liberation Movement (Abdelwahid Nour), and of planning to kill protesters and cause chaos.

The circumstances around which the alleged confessions were aired and the fact that they were made without any of the students having a lawyer present suggests that the confessions may have been obtained through torture and other ill-treatment. This is a violation of the Sudanese Criminal Procedures Act 1991, and against international standards.

I urge you to use your leadership position to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of the 47 students detained solely for exercising their human rights; that the students are not subjected to torture and other ill-treatment, while in detention, and that they are given access to family visits and lawyers of their choosing. I also urge you to ensure Sudanese authorities conduct an independent, effective and transparent investigation into the arbitrary arrest and the forced confessions of the students; and thoroughly investigate the circumstances of the killing of Salih Yagoub Omer during the raid on 27 December 2018.

Yours sincerely,

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Demonstrations in Sudan began on 19 December 2018 in protest against an increase in bread prices, shortage of fuel and cash in banks. The demonstrations are ongoing and have spread to at least 35 cities in 15 out of the 18 states in Sudan.

On 20 December 2018, the Sudanese government blocked most social media sites and messaging applications: Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and Instagram. The government has also imposed censorship on newspapers and they are regularly banned from publishing news about the protests.

On 20 and 21 December 2018, the Sudanese government imposed a state of emergency in three states: the Nile River, Al Gadaref and White Nile states; in addition to a number of cities including Dongola and Atabraa, where the protests originated. States of emergency have existed in Darfur states since 2003, in South Kordofan since 2011, and in North Kordofan and Kassala since 2017. This means that 12 of 18 states in Sudan are currently under a state of emergency.

Most institutions of learning in the country have been suspended. Amnesty International believes that more than 40 people have been killed and at least 175 more injured in the brutal crackdown on protests by the authorities. Many more have sustained debilitating injuries. More than 1,269 people have been arrested and the number continues to rise.

Amnesty International has documented serious human rights violations targeting students from Darfur. Since the beginning of the conflict in Darfur, students from the region who are studying in other parts of Sudan have been particularly subjected to arbitrary detentions, displacement from their university accommodations, torture and other ill-treatment, and unlawful killing by security forces.

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, and as a result, prisoners in Sudan are often 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 NSA was amended in January 2015 to expand the NISS's mandate from an intelligence agency focused on information gathering and analysis to allow for NISS 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 as well as 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 and regional standards well as well domestic law in the operation of its duties.

PREFERRED LANGUAGE TO ADDRESS TARGET: Arabic, English

You can also write in your own language.

PLEASE TAKE ACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE UNTIL: 08 03 2019.

Please check with the Amnesty office in your country if you wish to send appeals after the deadline.

NAME AND PREFERRED PRONOUN: 47 Darfuri Students and *Salih Yagoub Omer* (they/he)

LINK TO PREVIOUS UA: None