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NGO says Sudan continuing to arrest human rights defenders

July 20, 2012 (KHARTOUM) – Sudanese security forces continue to arbitrarily detain human rights activists as part of a wider crackdown on anti-government demonstrations, an NGO said on Friday, reporting new cases of arrest and updating information on what it describes as 11 individuals already in detention.

Human rights groups say Sudanese authorities arrested more than 200 people mostly activists during five weeks of countrywide protests against the government of President Omer Al-Bashir. They also warn that the detainees are at risk of torture and demand their immediate release or trial.

The African Centre For Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), a Sudanese NGO based in the UK, said in an e-mailed statement that the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) has continued to arbitrarily arrest human rights defenders on account of their work in monitoring and reporting the government's response to the protests.

ACJPS proceeded to report the arrest of three human rights activists by the NISS on 19 July in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur State, where three days ago they submitted a letter to the state governor calling for the release of detainees arrested in demonstrations.



The NGO also said it received information confirming the arrest of three human rights activists by the NISS in Khartoum. According to ACJPS, those are Mai Shatta, a female arrested from her home in Omdurman on July 1, Amro Hamad Omar, a male arrested on 29 June from around the epicenter of the protests in Wad Nubawi Mosque in Omdurman, and Fathi Bihir, a male arrested on 23 June in Omdurman.

ACJPS also reported the names of who it describes as 11 other human rights activists already in detention and at the risk of torture, calling on the government to end its crackdown on activists and guarantee the safety of detainees.

"ACJPS reiterates its call to the Government of Sudan to put an end to the harassment of human rights defenders and enable the continuance of their work in defence of human rights. We call on the Government of Sudan to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity of all detainees and to order their immediate release in the absence of valid legal charges that are consistent with international legal standards or, if such charges exist, to bring them before an impartial, independent and competent tribunal and guarantee their procedural rights at all times" the statement concluded.

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