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Sudan: Human Rights Lawyers Continue to Be Targeted

Sudanese human rights lawyer Adel Saeed must be either charged with a recognisable offence or immediately released, said the Centre for the Independence of Judges and Lawyers of the ICJ.

Adel Abdullah Nasir Aldeain Saeed, a lawyer with the Sudanese Organisation Against Torture (SOAT), was arrested in Nyala, Darfur, on 16 June. Since his arrest, he has been held in incommunicado detention and no formal charges have been brought against him.

"The arrest and detention of Mr. Saeed is another example of the precarious situation in which human rights lawyers work in Sudan, particularly in the Darfur region", said Nicholas Howen, ICJ Secretary General. "We are witnessing an extremely worrying situation: as militias continue to target the civilian population without any action from the Government, lawyers who denounce these attacks are arbitrarily arrested", added Mr. Howen.

The ICJ/CIJL urges the Sudanese authorities to respect its international obligations under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, in particular article 9, which guarantees the right to liberty and security. The ICJ/CIJL further calls for the release of all persons detained without charges, among them Mr. Salih Mahmoud Osman, a human rights lawyer detained since 1 February.

Background information

Mr. Adel is an active lawyer of the SOAT network, which provides free legal aid to persons sentenced to death, amputation, cross amputation and other punishments. In April 2004, Mr. Adel and other lawyers submitted an application to the director of the security forces in the Southern Darfur state (Nyala) to either bring charges against all detainees or to release them immediately.

The ICJ/CIJL has previously expressed its deep concern at the deterioration of the human rights situation in Sudan, particularly in Darfur, the site of an ongoing internal armed conflict. Numerous organisations, including the UN, have documented grave human rights abuses and war crimes in this province and in the rest of the country, including the capital Khartoum.

For further information, please contact José Zeitune, Lawyer, at +41 22 979 3812

The ICJ is an international non-governmental organisation comprising sixty of the world's most eminent jurists and has a worldwide network of national sections and affiliated organisations

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