

1 December 2016

Sudan – Akram Ahmed repeatedly summoned and held by Sudanese authorities

On 26 November 2016 around 4.30pm, Mr **Akram Ahmed** was arrested by the Sudanese National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS). He was held, then released at 12:00am with orders to reappear for questioning the next morning at 8:00am. Since 27 November, Akram Ahmed has been summoned and held for questioning from 8:00am to 12:00am daily. Colleagues of the human rights defender are concerned that he might be tortured or ill-treated.

[Akram Ahmed](#) is the co-founder of **Girifna (We are Fed up)** movement and is also an active volunteer in a number of charities in Sudan. *Girifna* is a grass-roots, non-violent movement that promotes Sudanese citizens' involvement in grass-roots movements in order to advocate for a democratic Sudan that respects civil rights, women's rights, freedom of the press, and religious freedoms.

On 26 November at around 4:30pm, Akram Ahmed was arrested by the the NISS near his home in the Wad Nobawi neighbourhood of Um Durman, Khartoum. The human rights defender was held and later released at midnight with orders to return to the NISS office at 8.00am, the following morning. Since 27 November, Akram Ahmed has been repeatedly summoned and held at NISS offices from 8:00am until 12.00am every day. Failure to appear before the NISS would lead to his arrest. This tactic of repeated summoning has been allegedly employed as an attempt to obstruct Akram Ahmed's work as a community organiser and human rights activist, given the ongoing civil disobedience and calls for peaceful protest in Sudan. Between 7 and 26 November, the NISS also summoned Akram Ahmed several times for questioning.

Since 6 June 2014, Akram Ahmed has been arrested five times by the NISS. Each time he was arrested, the human rights defender was subjected to torture and ill-treatment. He was severely beaten and deprived of sleep as well as threatened with the death penalty, life imprisonment and sexual violence. In September 2014, while under arrest the human rights defender was forced to carry a heavy office chair for hours at a time, and to sit on his knees raising his arms above his head for many hours. He was also made to stand in the sun for several hours a day over a period of three consecutive days. Akram Ahmed's treatment while in detention impacted him physically, requiring him to receive medical treatment.

Information provided by civil society organisations in Sudan illustrates a pattern whereby Sudanese authorities summon and hold activists and human rights defenders for questioning, demanding their presence at NISS offices the following day. This tactic is reportedly used to obstruct their activities for the promotion and protection of human rights and their involvement in the ongoing peaceful civil disobedience in the country. The civil disobedience is in protest to austerity measures implemented by the Sudanese government this month which have caused the price of basic commodities, and in particular medicines to double.

Front Line Defenders expresses concern that Akram Ahmed, and other human rights defenders, are being repeatedly summoned and held for questioning. Front Line Defenders is also deeply concerned that Akram Ahmed may be tortured or ill-treated by the NISS due to this having happened before to him, and [documentation](#) by several organisations illustrating a pattern of the use of torture and ill-treatment by the Sudanese NISS.

Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in the Republic of the Sudan to:

1. Immediately and unconditionally release Akram Ahmed and refrain from summoning for repeated questioning and arresting him, as well as other human rights defenders, as Front Line Defenders believes that they are being harassed and held solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Take all necessary measures to guarantee the physical and psychological integrity and security of Akram Ahmed;
3. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the allegations of torture and ill-treatment of Akram Ahmed, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
4. Cease targeting human rights defenders in the Republic of Sudan and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.