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## **Sudan – Student rights defenders detained incommunicado following peaceful protests**

Fifteen days following a raid by security officers on the office of human rights lawyer Mr **Nabil Adib**, on 5 May 2016, ten student activists continue to be held in incommunicado detention at Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) offices in Khartoum following their arrest. The arrests come after peaceful protests which were held on their University of Khartoum campus on 13 April 2016. On 5 May 2016, plain-clothed, armed officers stormed the office of human rights defender Nabil Adib while a meeting was being held with a group of students activists, including student rights defenders Ms **Wefag Gorashi**, Ms **Mai Adil** and Ms **Nafisa Mohamed**.

[Nabil Adib](#) is a Sudanese human rights lawyer and Chairperson of the Sudan Human Rights Monitor ([SHRM](#)), a Khartoum-based human rights organisation documenting human rights violations in Sudan, providing legal assistance to victims of State abuse and working on the defence of minorities in Sudan.

[Wefag Gorashi](#) is a Sudanese student rights activist and the leader of several youth groups in Khartoum, she is a member of the Khartoum University Student Committee working on the organisation of peaceful protests, mainly in connection with the ban of all forms of violence and weapon-carrying inside the university. [Mai Adil](#) is a Sudanese human rights defender, student leader at the Female Student Association in the University of Khartoum and a member of the Student Democratic Front. She has been advocating for women's rights, political and civil rights, and actively participating in the recent protests against the selling of the land of the University of Khartoum, for which she has been suspended from her studies for two years. [Nafisa Mohamed](#) is a Sudanese student rights defender in University of Khartoum and member of the Sudanese Conference Party, she has been advocating for women's rights and was also involved in leading protests of the student movement against the recent decision to sell the land of the University of Khartoum.

Following a refusal to a request to form a students' union, and a possible decision to move the premises of the University of Khartoum, which is to eventually be sold to investors, several protests took place to oppose the decision and to campaign for student's rights. As a result, on 5 May 2016, the University of Khartoum decided to expel twelve student activists and suspend six others for two years including the three student rights defenders.

A meeting which involved students, lawyers and staff members of Nabil Adib's human rights law firm took place on the same day to discuss a possible appeal against the dismissal or suspension decision. During the meeting, officers raided the legal offices and arrested the ten students, two lawyers, and two staff members. No arrest warrant was shown. In addition, NISS officers beat two staff members and seized legal files and Nabil Adib's personal laptop.

The lawyers and staff members were transferred to NISS offices in Khartoum North for interrogation and were released on the same day, while seven male students activists remain in incommunicado

detention at the political section of the NISS offices in the Shendi area of Khartoum North, and the three female student rights defenders at Omdurman Women's Prison. They have all been refused access to their family and lawyers.

In addition to the above mentioned student rights defenders, between 2 and 7 May 2016, security officers have arrested a number of other students activists who are currently detained incommunicado in police custody following the peaceful protests at the University of Khartoum on charges of "attack on a police officer during a protest".

Front Line Defenders expresses strong concern for the arrest and incommunicado detention of student rights defenders in Sudan, as it believes these acts to be directly motivated by their peaceful and legitimate human rights activities.

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

1. Immediately and unconditionally release the above mentioned human rights defenders, and refrain from any future harassment of them, as Front Line Defenders believes that they are being targeted solely as a result of their legitimate and peaceful work in the defence of human rights;
2. Allow the human rights defenders immediate and unfettered access to their families and lawyers;
3. Guarantee in all circumstances that all human rights defenders in the Republic of the Sudan are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions.