

## **SUDAN**

### **VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC FREEDOM**

*Dedicated to the Late Professor Mohamed Omer Bashir and  
the principles of human rights to which he dedicated his life.*

#### **Background**

**Sudan has traditionally enjoyed academic freedom of a kind rarely found in Africa or the Arab world. Since the 1930s, institutions of higher education have been the focal point of much open and critical discussion of political issues. The Graduates Congress, founded in 1938, was the forerunner of political parties which led the struggle for independence. In academia itself, the atmosphere was genuinely liberal, and there were no restrictions concerning the contents of the courses. Unlike many other universities in the region, study was based on a variety of references for each course and students were encouraged to develop their research capabilities and to express their own views.**

**The University of Khartoum was joined in the 1970s by three other Sudanese universities: the Islamic University of Omdurman, the University of Gezira (which is located in Wad Medani, and is rural-oriented) and the University of Juba, set up after the Addis Ababa peace agreement which in 1972 brought Sudan's first civil war to an end. In addition, the University of Cairo has a branch in Khartoum, and many Sudanese students study in universities in Egypt. There is also the Sudan University for Science and Technology (formerly the Khartoum Polytechnic), the Ahlia University (private), the Ahfad University College (private) and other specialized institutes.**

**These universities, particularly the University of Khartoum, have experienced free debate on a range of issues. The Khartoum University Students Union (KUSU) has played an important role in the country's political life since the colonial period. An open seminar on the constitutional problems of the country held at Khartoum University in October 1964 was the spark for the popular uprising that brought a peaceful end to the dictatorship of General Abboud. During the rule of President Jaafar Nimeiri (1969-1985) the students continued their**

**political activities. In 1973 a coalition of students, including many prominent Moslem Brothers, headed a strike that was a major challenge to the government. Students frequently carried out demonstrations in protest against the regime. The sight of artillery and armed troops besieging the university buildings and the students' barracks after any political unrest became common throughout Nimeiri's rule. Meanwhile, university lecturers played a prominent role in the struggle for political liberalism. For example, the University Lecturers Association held public meetings in 1983 in support of a strike by judges for the independence of the judiciary. The Association was one of the seven trade unions which established the Trade Unions Alliance that led the 1985 Popular Uprising that caused the overthrow of Nimeiri. During the subsequent parliamentary period, the university staff continued their role in the country's political life specially in issues related to secularism, democracy and of minorities' rights.**

**The Sudan Human Rights Organization (founded in 1985) was led by Professor Mohamed Omer Bashir and held its meetings at the university. The Philosophical Society which brought together university staff and members of the civil service, the Department of Extra-Mural Studies, the Institute of Afro-Asian Studies, the University Lecturers' Association at the University of Khartoum and student unions at various universities vigorously debated the country's problems and encouraged a liberal, secular future for Sudan.**

**Sudan's universities have been the locus of much critical research, the findings of which have been published by the Khartoum University Press (KUP). Titles produced by the KUP cover such topics as the developmental role of the Sudanese middle classes, the rights of the accused in Sudanese law, and religion and language in southern Sudan. Sudanese scholars have even been able to publish on matters such as the origin and development of the Anyanya (rebel) movement in the first civil war, and the role of corruption in the national economy.**

**Against this generally positive record, however, is a history of discrimination against students from deprived regions, in particular from the South but also from the West. This operates through the disadvantage that the students of these areas suffer on account of the scarcity of secondary schools. In the year of the Addis Ababa peace agreement (when many southern Sudanese returned to the country after completing their secondary education to a high standard in neighboring Uganda), only 27 southern students were admitted to the University of Khartoum. The numbers improved only slightly during the following decade, and by the 1980s, the numbers were declining again. In 1989, on the pretext that applications from the South had arrived late, on account of the war, no students from the South were admitted to Khartoum University. The handful of southerners who were allowed in were those who had applied from the North.**

**Academic freedom in Sudan has always required vigorous defense, against the propensity of both military and civilian governments to curtail it. The military rule of General Abboud saw army occupations of the campus. The rule of Nimeiri witnessed repeated attacks on the autonomy of higher education, including the summary dismissal of academics on account of their political views. One of the demands of the Popular Uprising that restored democracy in 1985 was for academic freedom, and the following years were generally ones in which academic freedom was respected. However the government of Sadiq el Mahdi (1986-9) detained academics who attempted to start a dialogue for peace with the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army, and harassed and detained Dr. Ushari Mahmoud, the author of a booklet which implicated the government in a massacre and the resurgence of slavery.**

### **The Coup in Higher Education**

**In June 1989, Lt-Gen. Omer al Bashir seized power in a coup d'etat and became head of a military government associated with Islamic fundamentalism. Academic freedoms have been violated under this government to an extent unprecedented in Sudanese history.**

**Almost immediately after the June 30 coup, a "coup" in higher education became imminent. This was referred to by the government as the "revolution" in higher education.<sup>1</sup> It duly began with the appointment of Dr. Ibrahim A. Omer as the Chairman of National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) and later the Minister of Higher Education.<sup>2</sup> The NCHE was seen in the past as no more than a coordinating body. The present regime has given the NCHE a range of powers which makes it the final arbiter in many cases, such as appointment and dismissal.**

### **The University Laws**

**After the overthrow of Nimeiri's regime in April 1985, the University of Khartoum adopted a new Act which:**

- a - Guaranteed academic freedom in teaching and research.**
- b - Recognized the University Staff Association and the Students' Union and secured their representation in the governing bodies of the University.**
- c - Rejected any prejudice based on religion, race or political affiliation.**
- d - Stipulated that top academic and administrative jobs in the University be filled by elections, with a secret ballot. This was actually implemented and all top jobs were contested in a fair and animated election in 1986.**

**This democratic act was the first casualty of the fundamentalists. It was repealed in 1989. All acts of other universities and higher educational institutes were also repealed. Instead, a single act controlling all higher education institutes was promulgated. This gives the President the right to appoint the Vice-Chancellor and his deputy at all the public higher institutes. The Vice-Chancellor is to appoint the deans, the heads of departments and all senior administrators. Accordingly, all these senior posts were then systematically taken over by academics who are members or sympathizers of the Moslem Brothers. In some cases, non academics have been appointed. One example is Hafiz al-Sheikh a-Zaaky, appointed the dean of the Faculty of Law at Khartoum University. According to university regulations, Mr. A-Zaaky has no qualifications to be even a teaching assistant in the faculty. His great asset, however was his religious**

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<sup>1</sup> General El Beshir himself used this expression in a speech on May 27, 1991, when he inaugurated the University of Kodrofan in El Obeid.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. Ibrahim Omer is a well known proponent of fundamentalist Islam who supported Nimeiri's Shari'a Laws in 1983. He advocated the burning of the books of the philosopher Ustaz Mahmoud Mohammad Taha in 1984, and supported the execution of Taha on a charge of apostasy in January 1985. Later he was a Member of Parliament representing the National Islamic Front (NIF, the Moslem Brothers' political party).

fundamentalism.<sup>3</sup>

## **Staffing**

**A central objective of the regime is to fill up the higher education institutes with members and sympathizers of the Moslem Brothers wherever possible and to remove any potential opponent of their views, targets, or policies. In order to achieve this, the government issued a call for the emigrant Sudanese academicians to return home. It was clear that the call was intended only for members and sympathizers of the Moslem Brothers, many of whom did come back and were duly appointed in the various higher institutes.**

**The elected Vice-Chancellor of Khartoum university was dismissed and replaced by Dr. Muddathir Al-Tingari, an NIF sympathizer. Later on it appeared that Dr. Al-Tingari was not ready to go as far as the government wanted. He tried to abide by some of the university traditions concerning consultation with academic staff. This proved unacceptable to the government, and he was replaced by Dr. Mamoun Humida, who has a very limited academic experience.**

**In Gezira University, the Vice-Chancellor wrote to the head of the government asking to be transferred to an academic post after his period as a Vice-Chancellor had finished, according to the then university act. The reply was a letter of dismissal, claiming "public interest." He was replaced by a Moslem Brother who announced several times that he participated in planning and executing the military coup. Mr. Ahmed Al-Tayeb was appointed Dean of Graduate Studies and Academic Affairs before completing his own PhD, while Mr. Nasrul Din was appointed Head of Department before passing his PhD.**

**The complementary aspect to this policy is the systematic dismissal of university lecturers. The dismissal process has been carried out in two manners to serve two purposes.**

**The first manner of dismissal is direct. It is based on a section in the Civil Services Act that allows the government to dismiss any employee, citing "public interest", with no need to give any further explanation. The section goes back to Nimeiri's period. After the fall of Nimeiri, the trade unions lobbied for its abolition, which the elected government of Sadiq el Mahdi refused -- it even went as far as dismissing some employees for political reasons using the same section. At least eighty-four lecturers have been dismissed in the alleged "public interest" by the current government.**

**The other manner of dismissal is to summon the members of the staff to the Popular Defense Forces training. The Popular Defense Forces are militias established by the government to swell the ranks of the military and build up a paramilitary group loyal to the Moslem Brothers. Training camps have been established at Wad Medani and Giteina, near Khartoum. Training involves arduous physical exercise and classes in the brand of militant Islam favored by the government -- which most educated people find a humiliating experience. Starting in December 1990, training was made compulsory for both students and lecturers, regardless of their age. The names of academics summoned for training were announced on the mass media. Those who refused to join are summarily dismissed. At Gezira University, for example, seven**

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<sup>3</sup> Mr. A-Zaaky is a well known Moslem Brother, a former NIF Member of Parliament, and was an emergency judge in one of the emergency courts that were responsible for many arbitrary decisions and human rights abuses in 1984.

**lecturers who refused to comply with the order to join the training were dismissed.**

**The government's aim is, first, to remove any political opponent or any potential political opponent. Those who are classified under this category will be dismissed without consideration of how the post can then be filled. A second aim is to give positions to the Moslem Brother academics who have returned to Sudan.**

**Most of the dismissed staff have proved extremely difficult to replace. Twelve leading Egyptian mathematicians wrote to the Minister of Higher Education protesting against the dismissal of Professor Mouhamed Al-Amin Al-Tom. They stated in their letter that Professor Al-Tom is more than welcome in many universities throughout the world, so they failed to see how Khartoum University could dispense with him. In 1976, the University of Khartoum estimated the number of mathematicians that it needed at thirty six; at the time of Professor Al-Tom's dismissal there were fewer than ten.**

**Academics have been faced with very limited choices. These consist of, collaboration, resistance (which implies dismissal, imprisonment and even torture), silence, or flight into exile.**

### **Islamization of Higher Education**

**The government has begun to try to influence the content of courses taught in the universities. An extreme example of this is the treatment of Dr. Farouk Ibrahim el Nur, a lecturer in the Faculty of Science at the University of Khartoum. Dr. Farouk was arrested on November 30, 1989, at a time of widespread anti-government civil disobedience. The major reason for his detention was probably his left-wing political views. However, while he was kept in an unofficial detention center, known as a "ghost house", by members of the newly created "Security of the Revolution", Dr. Farouk was questioned about his teaching of the Darwinian theory of evolution. In a letter to Lt-Gen. al Bashir, Dr. Farouk later described his experiences:**

**On the evening of Saturday, December 2, I understood during an interrogation by Colonel Bakri Hassan Salih (a member of the ruling Revolutionary Command Council and head of the revolutionary security system) that he disapproves of the contents of the courses I teach at the university.**

**Fundamentalist security officials considered that Darwinism was incompatible with Islam, and tortured Dr. Farouk in an attempt to force him to recant his views. Dr. Farouk's letter detailed his ordeal:**

**I was flogged, kicked, hit on the face, head, and other parts of the body by professional torturers. I was threatened with death, humiliated and subjected to other types of torture. Afterwards, I was transferred to a small toilet that was flooded with water where I spent three days during which time I was beaten, humiliated, and deprived of sleep. Then I was taken to a bathroom with five detainees where the same process of torture was repeated for nine days. We have been prevented from observing our prayer or brushing our teeth ...**

**Dr. Farouk concluded:**

**Regarding the contents of my course at the University, I would like to draw to your attention that the only body which is legally authorized to make such comments is the University Senate.**

**Over the years, the Islamic fundamentalists have pushed towards the creation of a department of Islamic Studies at the University of Khartoum. This was founded in 1978, shortly after Nimeiri brought the Moslem Brothers into government. The original scheme was set it up as a "service" department and to make Islamic Studies compulsory subject in all faculties. (The question concerning the status of Christian or agnostic students was never raised.) This however could not be carried out because of the shortage of staff and facilities.**

**In January 1987, the Department of Islamic Studies and Psychology at the University of Khartoum and the Washington-based Institute for Islamic Knowledge held a conference on the Islamisation of knowledge, a notion that appealed to the Moslem Brothers in Sudan and became the cornerstone of their educational theorizing. The present regime fully adopted this notion as the basis of its educational philosophy.**

**Two "Institutes for the Islamisation of Knowledge" were set up in 1991; one in Khartoum and the other within the University of Gezira. The aim of these institutes is to see to it that all knowledge and learning emanates from "Islamic Principles". This presumably includes natural sciences. When challenged by some academics to give an example of the characteristics of Islamic Agriculture, Dr. Bireima of Gezira University replied that students should be well versed in the "invocation of locusts" a religious tract designed -- when recited -- to ward off locusts from the harvest. He had also mentioned the rain prayer *Lal istisgha* as the answer to any irrigation problems.**

**However, the Institutes for the Islamisation of Knowledge are no joke. They have a huge budget while the staff consists of only two members, the Dean and the Secretary. They have already added subjects like Islamic Economy and Islamic Accounting and have suggested dropping the Hippocratic Oath at the Faculty of Medicine. Dr. Malik Badri, who heads the Khartoum Institute for Islamisation of Knowledge sees himself as a pioneer in reshaping the whole educational system, from kindergarten to postgraduate level.**

**The idea of Islamisation of knowledge is at odds with academic freedom because it excludes the contributions of Sudanese Christians, animists, and secular Muslims and rejects the common human heritage and the free exchanges which enrich all cultures.**

**One of the main political objectives of the government is the imposition of sharia (Islamic Law), which entails major negative consequences for academic freedom. For example, the Islamic code implemented by the then-President Nimeiri did not include an article prohibiting apostasy. Nonetheless in January 1985 Ustaz Mahmoud Taha, leader of the Republican Brothers and an Islamic scholar who opposed Nimeiri's interpretation of Islam, was executed for that alleged crime. This and other similar legal provisions are directly contrary to academic freedom. On March 22, 1991, a new Penal Code was introduced. Section 126 of the this code prohibits apostasy. The definition given for "apostasy" under this section is very wide and can easily be used to convict secular or open-minded researchers.**

## **Arabization**

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**One of the more insidious means of undermining academic freedom in Sudan has been the introduction of a policy of Arabization. The simplified argument put forward by the regime is that the Sudanese should study in Arabic just as the Germans study in German and the English in English.**

**This argument is misleading. Arabic, though the language of the majority, is not the only Sudanese language. More than half of the population speaks other languages. Not a single one of the more than one hundred other languages has had the chance to be the language of education at any stage of the education system. Arabic is used in the primary and secondary schools. It is also the exclusive language in two universities: The Islamic University of Omderman and the Khartoum branch of Cairo University.**

**There has been a Department of Arabic Language and Literature at the University of Khartoum from the time it was established. It is only since the 1970s that courses in the other Sudanese languages have been introduced for postgraduate studies in the Institute of Afro-Asian Studies.**

**The Arabization was introduced without adequate materials available in Arabic, both in terms of textbooks and references. Many of the teaching staff need to be trained how to teach in Arabic. The academic staff were not consulted about this decision, which was made by the political leadership of the country.**

**The policy of Arabization is seen by many academics as part of the cultural "siege" being tightened around the country. British volunteer teachers were sent back home in November 1990<sup>4</sup>. The Central Distribution House originally established by Nimeiri in 1970 now censors all overseas publications before allowing them inside the country. The prices of UK and US publications have become (or were made) prohibitively expensive, which puts them out of the reach of all but the very rich. Travel abroad is now almost impossible for the ordinary citizen. Apart from the hurdles of four (often competing) security organizations, the traveller has to pay about LS 160,000. The government has sent delegations in an attempt to lure back students who are already abroad. One such delegation toured Eastern Europe in 1991. All of this is designed to cut the country off from outside contact and outside influences. The access of Sudanese academics to international gatherings of academic exchange is already under the strict control of the government, whose tendency is to push the Sudanese academic community towards a point virtual isolation. Numerous Sudanese academics have had their travel restricted; only a few examples can be given here. Prof. Mohamed Omer Bashir was prevented from attending a conference of Sudanese studies in Durham, UK, in April 1991. Dr. Fadwa Abdel Rahman Ali Taha, a lecturer in history was taken from the aeroplane due to take her to the same conference; after prolonged interrogation, she was allowed to proceed. In December 1989, Mrs. Suad Ibrahim Ahmed, who is in her fifties, was not allowed to travel to a conference in Dar es Salaam (Tanzania) at which she was due to give the keynote address, in the absence of a male chaperone.**

**This policy is complemented by the regime's policy towards foreign academics who engage in Sudanese studies. Prof. Peter Woodward was prevented from entering the country in September 1991, despite having been guaranteed a visa by the Sudanese Embassy in London. Such obstruction has**

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<sup>4</sup> Immediately after this, the minister responsible, Abdala Mohammad Ahmed, visited Iran. See *Sudan Update*, December 5, 1990.

**antagonized the international academic community considerably. The Norwegian University of Bergen has recently been obliged to suspend its joint research program with the University of Khartoum.**

**Arabization is the other side of the coin. The government anticipates that if students' command of English is kept to a minimum, their supply of "appropriate" Arabic fundamentalist texts will be easy to arrange. In the meantime, children are already being instructed in a fundamentalist manner through control of the Ministry of Education.**

**Thus, indiscriminate Arabization is not only a breach of academic freedom; it is part of a wider cultural noose. Even the University of Juba, a mainly Southern University, was not exempt from Arabization. Despite the fact that the Addis Ababa agreement dictated English as the official language of education in the south.<sup>5</sup>**

### **The Plummeting of Academic Standards**

**Higher education in the Sudan has always enjoyed a high reputation. Before independence, the University College of Khartoum was something of a showpiece to which students from several African and Arab countries were sent. These traditions were kept up after independence. Newly-established universities and institutions measured up to the same high standards in rigorous admission and thorough tuition.**

**When the present government seized power, it declared that -- as part of the "coup" in higher education -- it was going to establish ten new universities and double the intake of higher institutions.**

**In the case of the Technological Institute, all preparations for elevation to university status were completed in 1989 and the final document was in the office of then Prime-Minister Sadiq al Mahdi, who was overthrown before signing. El Bashir duly signed and the "Sudan University for Science and Technology" was born.**

**Other cases are less straightforward. In the University of Gezira, the Faculty of Medicine had an intake of fifty students when the fundamentalists took power in 1989. The plan was to increase the number gradually with a corresponding increase in the teaching staff and in equipment and premises. There were genuine difficulties because the Faculty of Medicine was working with only fifty per cent manpower among the teaching staff. Efforts were being made to overcome this and other problems.**

**The government decided to double the intake to one hundred students -- without any increase in staffing or equipment. The following year the number was doubled again to 200. Now there are 500 students; a tenfold increase from 1989. The number of teaching staff has actually decreased because of dismissals. The laboratories and lecture theaters are being run down and the standards have inevitably suffered.**

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<sup>5</sup> Khalid Al Mubarak, "Al T'arieb Fi Al Soudan - Dawatu Haqqin Urid Biha Batil" Al Hayat - April 1992.



**Some critics of the government have concluded that it is an official policy to downgrade academic standards, transforming higher education into no more than an extension of the secondary schooling system, and thereby discouraging the open debate that is characteristic of a university.**

### **The University of Khartoum**

**The situation at the University of Khartoum gives rise to the most serious worry, to the extent that some observers doubt whether it will continue to function as a viable institution of higher education in the future. The regime has determined upon the kind of policies which are designed to change it beyond recognition if not destroy it altogether.**

**According to some sources, the government intends to dismantle the University piecemeal and turn it to a postgraduate center, thus putting an end to its role as thorn in the flesh of all military regimes in the post-independence history of Sudan.**

**The University Teaching Staff Association was outlawed and its chairman Dr. Ali Abdala Abbas arrested and badly treated. He was eventually released. A similar fate befell the Khartoum University Students' Union (KUSU) and unions in other universities. When opposition supporters won the KUSU elections in July 1991, the KUSU offices were ransacked. The "Reserve Police" squad stormed the campus with the help of soldiers. Two students were killed. Thirteen students were dismissed and the university was closed. It was reopened only in January 1992. The members of staff and the majority of the students at the university expected the new Vice-Chancellor Dr. Mamoun Humida to reverse the decisions of his predecessor concerning the banning of the Union and the dismissal of student leaders. It was widely appreciated that unrest would ensue at the campus unless those decisions were reversed. These predictions were to prove all-too-accurate.**

**On the evening of the February 8, 1992, the Union, which did not accept the decision concerning the ban on its activities, called for a meeting at which students aired their views about their confrontation with the new university administration. The new Vice-Chancellor responded by expelling seven more students from the university on February 9. A day later, the Union conducted a poll in order to decide whether to boycott examinations as a protest against the administration's decisions. The attempts of members of staff to act as mediators between the students and the Vice-Chancellor were rebuffed by the latter and even when he agreed to allow a group of professors, led by Mohammed Hashim Awad, to mediate, he rejected their compromise recommendations out of hand.**

**On February 13, the students became more militant. Some tore up their examination papers, refusing to sit for their exams. The Vice-Chancellor evidently decided that it was time that a severe response was required. Loudspeakers were used in the halls of residence and along the main road to call the students to examination. The following day, a large number of armed groups descended on the main campus, and occupied it. Many students were savagely beaten and some were arrested during the following two days. At 7:30 in the morning of February 15, one of the armed groups on campus invaded the courtyard of one of the women's halls of residence and two bullets were fired in the air.**

**On February 17, the Vice-Chancellor ordered all students out of the hall of residence. Many of them did not know where to go. They were denied access to their teachers and their libraries, but were still ordered to continue to sit for their examinations. On February 15 and 16, for the first time in the history of the**

**University, examinations were held outside the campus -- in the Police College in Khartoum and the African Islamic Center.<sup>6</sup> Some students were taken to examination centers both inside and outside the university at gunpoint. The presence of armed men around examination centers and sometimes inside them became a familiar sight. On the morning of February 22, about thirty students from the Faculty of Science were forced to sit for an examination at gunpoint.**

**There was no guarantee, under these conditions, that details of the question papers were not leaked. In one instance, it became public knowledge that the questions in a question paper in the Faculty of Science were leaked and the Faculty had to cancel the paper.**

**Members of staff issued a long statement on March 12, deploring the "criminal" actions of the Vice-Chancellor and the administration and condemning the Council of the University for its willingness to endorse all the Vice-Chancellor's decisions (which it had done at a meeting held on February 26). All the members of the Council were appointed by Omar al-Bashir, so their supine attitude came as no surprise. The staff statement also points out that the examinations were held while the university was living under unacceptable conditions and before members of staff had the chance to finish teaching their courses.**

**Members of staff asked that the results of the examinations be declared null and void given the conditions under which they were held. But the Vice-Chancellor refused to listen. He responded by dismissing six teaching assistants and a number of lecturers and professors. On July 15, the Vice-Chancellor dismissed eight students, accusing them of violating the university regulations and disturbing its peace.**

**One important element in the assault on the University of Khartoum has been the attack on the Students' Fund. In the past, students were given free board and textbooks and sometimes scholarships. The current government has abolished that system and students who want financial support should apply to the Students' Fund. The Fund is controlled by the Moslem Brothers, which enables them to manipulate the Fund for their political interest.**

### **The Attack on Khartoum University Press**

**Khartoum University Press (KUP) owns its own printing press, located in Khartoum North. It is the most prestigious publisher and distributor in the country. Because of its relative autonomy within the university structure and because it is partly subsidized, it was able to take risks by publishing books no other publisher would consider assessing (for instance, books on the fishes and plants of the Sudan, for which there is an extremely limited market, or like works of literature by new authors).**

**In the last years of Nimeiri's rule, fundamentalist publishers, distributors and financiers (e.g. Abdul Rahim Mekkawi, owner of Al Dar Al Soudaniyya Lil Kutub and member of the boards of several Islamic banks and institutions) complained to several banks and ministries that KUP was subsidized but allowed to compete openly in the book market.**

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<sup>6</sup> An institute financed by the Organization of the Islamic Conference for teaching students from African countries.

**After the collapse of Nimeiri's rule in 1985 Mr. M. Juha, acting on behalf of the Moslem Brother publishing house Iqr'a, tried to arrange a take-over bid of the distribution centers of KUP. He failed.**

**After the coup of June 30, 1989, KUP became a target for the repressive actions of the government.**

- a - The printing press and all the distribution kiosks and centers were searched for "non-Islamic" literature.**
- b - The Director General was interrogated by the security service more than three times.**
- c - Many books were confiscated (including a non-academic book on the history of coups in the Sudan).**
- d - *Hurouf*, the cultural quarterly magazine of KUP, was banned by dismissing its two executive editors: Mr. Sharaf Al Din Yassin Mahmoud and Mr. Al Bashir Sahal Jum'a Sahal in July 1991, as well as the Deputy Director of Distribution, Nur Al Huda Mohammad.<sup>7</sup>**
- e - All advertising on TV and radio for KUP book stalls or book fairs was stopped by the Minister of Culture and Information, Abdalla Mohamed Ahmad. This advertising used to be free as a form of indirect subsidy to the non-profit KUP.**

**This belligerence towards KUP has two objectives. The most obvious is that its Moslem Brother competitors, namely Iqr'a, Dar Al Soudaniyya Lil Kutub, Dar Al Fikr and others would like to handicap the country's leading publisher and distributor. KUP's share in printing text books and exercise books for the Ministry of Education is extremely lucrative.**

**Moreover, because of its status as a non-profit academic institution, KUP was outside the clutches of the Central Distribution House. During Nimeiri's rule KUP traded in books with China and the USSR. Now its autonomy has been destroyed and all its publications, imports and exports are subject to the most suffocating censorship.**

### **The University of Gezira**

**The University of Gezira has also been a target of government repression. In November 1990, the chairman of the ruling council issued a decree to dismiss eight members of the academic staff. This policy continued and the total number of dismissed staff numbers sixteen.**

**Following the dismissal of the eight members of faculty, the students at Gezira staged strikes and demonstrations. During these protests, the Security Forces rounded up seventeen male students and an equal number of female students with a view to "teaching them a lesson". On November 28, 1990, the students were taken to the horse-racing course (now used as headquarters for the Popular Defense Forces). The military physician, Colonel Dr. Malik Ali Abdul Gadir, Deputy Governor of Central Region supervised in person the brutal corporal lashing of both boys and girls. Especially humiliating was the**

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<sup>7</sup> See Mr. Sharaf Eldin Yassin Mahmoud's testimony, "Sudan: Torture as censorship", Article 19, April 2, 1992.

**beating of the girls. Following the forty lashes (on the buttocks), four suffered psychological trauma (manifested in involuntary urination) and are still undergoing psychiatric treatment. The social context is vital for the proper understanding of the horror of this crime.**

**Although women are disadvantaged they are also put on a pedestal and a chivalrous veneration towards them is a measure of a man's manners and integrity. Traditional folk poets sing the praise of those who protect the girls of the neighborhood. That is why one of the soldiers refused to beat the girls. As a result he himself was given forty lashes and his head – together with those of the students – was partly shaved. This is an old form of tribal insult against vanquished prisoners of war.**

**Apparently, punishment of female students did not satisfy the Vice Chancellor. He suspended three girls at examination time and wrote to each of them a letter with copies to their Deans:**

**Your provocative laughter outside your hostels while I was walking with my children must have been aimed at me. You were also wearing dresses which did not observe Islamic standards. I, therefore, find myself with no option but to suspend you from the university for two years after which an application for your readmission will be considered. You are hereby instructed to evacuate the hostel within seven days during which you should seek a safe company to your home.**

### **Juba University**

**Just like the many of the southerners, Juba university is seeking refuge in the unwelcoming capital Khartoum. In mid-1989, the University was transferred to Khartoum on account of war but was not allocated sufficient resources to be able to function properly. Three years later, the university is still at Khartoum and the situation remains as bad, if not worse. The male students still live in the Ministry of Youth's hostel outside the city. They are using the premises of the Extra-Mural and Education Faculty which are far away from each other and even further from the students' hostels. The lack of lecturers is affecting them more severely. Forty-five lecturers were dismissed because they had failed to return from abroad in due time.**

**One of main reasons for establishing a university in the South was to help bridge the gap in education between the South and the north. It was for this reason that the admission policy was to allocate 75% of the intake for the Southerners. It is not clear whether this rule is working or not, in a time when most of the secondary schools in the south are closed and under a regime which abides by no rule. Juba University used to offer Training Diploma for the civil servants in the South, there is no way for such courses now. Meanwhile, the large number of southern students who study in Egypt are suffering due to the fact that the Sudan government has stopped paying its share of their grants.**

### **The Sudan University for Science and Technology**

**The SUST has also suffered its share of repression by the government. A total of seven lecturers and one administrative officer were arbitrarily dismissed by the government. Musa al Khalifa, the Deputy President of the banned Teaching Staff Union and Izz el Din Taifour, the Secretary-General of the Administrative Union of the University, were among those dismissed.**

## **The Higher Institute of Music and Drama**

**An institution which was singled out for the harshest treatment was the Higher Institute of Music and Drama (HIMD), founded in 1969 (just before Nimeiri's coup). The HIMD was the only outlet for post-secondary instruction in both music and drama in the country. Its graduates formed the backbone of orchestras and ensembles in all cultural institutions: radio, TV, Folklore Troupe, private companies. Most leading singers and actors were admitted as mature students or joined the extra-mural courses and added to the prestige of the Institute. Since all universities in the country did not teach music and recognized drama only as part of literature, the HIMD had a unique role to play.**

**In 1991, the HIMD was "frozen" when it had to vacate its rented premises in Khartoum North. The government did not offer alternative buildings. Instead it put an end to the HIMD's autonomy by incorporating it under the umbrella of the Sudan University for Science and Technology (SUST) which had neither extra funds nor premises for the "new" institution.**

**Five Korean music teachers at the HIMD were not paid and politely made to understand that they were not welcome. They duly left. Then the exodus of Sudanese teaching staff accelerated. They are now either working in Libya, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia or are exiled in Egypt.**

**Yousif Al Mousili (a lecturer but well known singer in his own right) started to teach music as a volunteer at the Youth Center, in Quarter 27 of Al-Sahafa, Khartoum. The Moslem Brothers intervened and the courses were banned. Yousif is now an exile in Cairo. Less than a quarter of the members of the teaching staff are now in Sudan.**

**Thus the HIMD has lost its autonomy; has no premises, no teachers and is effectively finished.**

**The whole intellectual atmosphere is not conducive to the study of music or drama. Advertisements for musical events are now banned. Singing is not allowed after the 11:00 p.m. curfew (imposed immediately after June 30, 1989 and still in force). Representation of statues and paintings is frowned upon. The National Theater has effectively been brought to a halt: not a single season has been organized since the coup. Leading actors, Abd Al Rahim Qurani, Yahia Fadlalla and Al Sammani Lual were barred from entering the National Theater when they objected to the deletion of a scene from "M'asat Yaroul," a play on a Southern Sudanese theme<sup>8</sup>.**

**Before the HIMD was frozen, the Dean, Dr. Al Tahir Hussein Dafalla (a well known fundamentalist) refused to grant permission to Ms. Khalida Al Junaid (a teaching assistant, piano) to travel to Moscow for her graduate studies unless she was accompanied by a male chaperone. Under the insistence of her father, he let her go several weeks after the beginning of the semester.**

## **Conclusion**

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<sup>8</sup> Khalid Al Mubarak, "The Arts under General El Besheir," report to the African Writers in Exile conference, London, March 27-28, 1992.

**The aim of Moslem Brothers in Sudan is not merely to "pacify" institutions of higher education or "control" them. They are determined to restructure and remold them to fit the "Islamisation of knowledge" concept. Their way of thinking involves not only erasing non-Islamic principles but also variant interpretations of Islam as well. Their ultimate aim is to mould every mind in the nation into their chosen model. As a minority group, they realize that unless they resort to repressive and violent methods, they stand no chance of holding on to power for long. Hence the ferocity of the onslaught on higher education which since colonial times has played the role of sparking political dissent.**

**The ferocity of violations of academic freedom and human rights in higher education is set to continue and even intensify while the government maintains its grip on power.**

**The military government and its fundamentalist supporters have gone beyond the desire to "harness" higher education. They are quite prepared to dismantle the whole edifice if need be. This calls for the strongest condemnation, backed up with measures to isolate the proponents of the current abuses.**

### **Recommendations**

**Africa Watch calls upon the Government of Sudan to:**

- \* **Re-enact the University Laws enacted during the parliamentary period which guarantee academic freedom, university autonomy and the principle of free election to senior posts.**
- \* **Cease the arbitrary arrest and detention of academics and students, and investigate the cases of torture, taking appropriate measures against those found to be guilty of abuse.**
- \* **Cease the arbitrary dismissal of academic and administrative staff and reinstate all those who have been arbitrarily dismissed.**
- \* **Guarantee freedom of thought and scientific research regardless of religion, ethnic origin or political affiliation.**
- \* **Lift the ban on the University Lecturers' Associations, restore the elected officers to their positions, and return all confiscated assets.**
- \* **Lift the ban on the Student Unions, restore the elected officers who have been dismissed to their positions, and guarantee freedom of association for students on campus.**
- \* **Reconsider the policy of indiscriminate Arabization; instead set up a process of consultation with the academic staff concerning the language of instruction and take appropriate action according to the recommendations reached. Indigenous languages other than Arabic should be given the opportunity to develop.**

**Africa Watch calls upon academics in foreign universities, especially those who are associated with Sudanese studies, to express their solidarity with their Sudanese colleagues. Contact with Sudanese institutions of higher education should be confined to liaising with academics on the basis of their individual merit; institutional contacts should be halted until academic freedom has been reestablished in**

**Sudan.**

## **APPENDIX**

**A list of the members of the teaching staff who were dismissed and/or arrested on political grounds.**

- 1 Dr. Abd Al Mutaal Gershah (Science and Technology) Gezira University. A founder member of the Amnesty International Section in Sudan (1986) - dismissed while in the USA. Now resident in the UK.**
  - 2 Professor Osman Fadl (Agricultural Science) Gezira University. Chairman of the Gezira University Teaching Staff Association. Former Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Science. Dismissed because of refusal to join the Popular Defense Force training course. Now in Cairo.**
  - 3 Dr. Al Baqir Ali Alfaki (Medicine) Gezira University. Dismissed.**
  - 4 Dr. Fathi Khalil (Economics) Gezira University - dismissed.**
  - 5 Dr. Isam Al Boushi (Mathematics) Gezira University. Dean of Post-graduate Studies and Academic Affairs. Accused of being a supporter of, martyr, philosopher Mahmoud Mohamed Taha. Dismissed.**
  - 6 Dr. Abdul Basit Mirghani (Medicine) Gezira University. Supervised the treatment of female students after they were brutally whipped. Dismissed because he refused to join the Popular Defense Force training course.**
  - 7 Dr. Ali Abdalla Abbas (English) University of Khartoum - Chairman of the Teaching Staff Association. Played a key role in the adoption of the democratic University Act 1986. Arrested immediately after the coup, kept incommunicado, transferred to the remote Shalla Prison, then released. Now in Cairo.**
  - 8 Dr. Al Sheikh Kineish (Medicine) University of Khartoum arrested without charge. Taken to the remote Shalla Prison. Released. Now in USA.**
  - 9 Dr. 'Ushari Ahmad Mahmoud (Linguistics) - arrested immediately after the coup. Offered release if he retracted human rights reports. He refused. Released following a partial amnesty for political prisoners in 1991.**
  - 10 Dr. Farouq Ahmad Ibrahim (Science) University of Khartoum - one of the first to be arrested and tortured. Wrote a record of torture which was widely reported abroad. Released.**
  - 11 Dr. Bashir Omar Fadlalla (Economics) University of Khartoum. Former Minister of Finance, before the coup. Arrested and released.**
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- 12 **Richard Hassan Sakit (Dean of Medicine) - Dean of the Faculty of Medicine in Juba University. Arrested and released without charge.**
  - 13 **Dr. Ahmad Osman Siraj (Psychiatry) University of Khartoum. Arrested and tried. Sentenced to death. Released recently.**
  - 14 **Dr. Mamoun M. Hussein (Medicine) University of Khartoum, part-time. Tried, sentenced to death. Released after an international solidarity campaign.**
  - 15 **The late Professor M. O. Beshir (Institute of Afro-Asian Studies, University of Khartoum). Founder of Sudan Human Rights Organization in 1985. Contract (after pension) not renewed. On several occasions, he was prevented from travelling abroad to attend conferences and to obtain medical treatment, which contributed to his tragic death in January 1992.**
  - 16 **Professor Omar M. Al Aqra'a (Architecture) University of Khartoum. Former Dean of Graduate College. Resigned citing violations of Academic Freedom. Forced to vacate university house in 48 hours.**
  - 17 **Professor Ahmad Abdul Majid (Science) University of Khartoum. Veteran campaigner against Nimeiri's rule. Resigned citing violations of academic freedom. Forced to vacate university house 48 hours.**
  - 18 **Professor Muhammed Al Amin Al Tom (Mathematics) University of Khartoum. Veteran opponent of Nimeiri's rule. Dismissed; now in Cairo.**
  - 19 **Dr. 'Asaim Maghribi (Environment) University of Khartoum. Resigned citing violations of academic freedom. Forced to vacate university house in 48 hours.**
  - 20 **Dr. Abdullahi Ali Ibrahim (Folklore) University of Khartoum. Prominent writer. Dismissed while in the USA. Played a significant role in underground opposition to Nimeiri's rule.**
  - 21 **Professor Samir Gobrial (Engineering) University of Khartoum. Dismissed. (Most probably as part of the desire to drive members of the Coptic Community out of the country).**
  - 22 **Dr. Taisier M. Ahmad (Political Science) University of Khartoum. Played an important role before the coup in mediation between the SPLA and the northern political parties. Dismissed.**
  - 23 **Dr. Al Wathiq Kamier (Anthropology). Played a role in mediation between Southern and Northern political parties. Dismissed while in Cairo.**
  - 24 **Dr. Fadwa 'Abd Al Rahman Ali Taha (History) University of Khartoum. Dismissed. Daughter of a prominent Umma Party figure and ex-minister.**
  - 25 **Professor Ali Osman M. Salih (Archaeology) University of Khartoum. He was active in opposing Nimeiri's rule. Arrested and released.**
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- 26 Mr. Moses Machar (Senior administrator) Juba University. Arrested and released.**
- 27 Dr. Muhammad Sayed Al Gaddal (History) University of Khartoum. Member of the committee of the writers union. Arrested. Health deteriorated in detention. Released but poorly.**
- 28 Dr. Muhammad O. Wahabani (Physics) University of Khartoum. Dismissed.**
- 29 Dr. Bushra Al Fadil (Russian Language) University of Khartoum. Dismissed.**
- 30 Professor Riyadh Bayyoumi (Medicine) University of Khartoum. Dismissed.**
- 31 Dr. Kamil Ibrahim Hassan (Agriculture) University of Khartoum. Arrested.**
- 32 Dr. Khalid Hussein Al Kid (Political Science) Ahlia University. Arrested and badly treated. Released after an international solidarity campaign. Now in UK.**
- 33 Dr. Farouq Kudouda (Dean of Economics) Juba University. Arrested and released; remains in poor health.**
- 34 Dr. Mu'tasim Abdalla Mahmoud (Engineering) University of Khartoum. Dismissed.**
- 35 Dr. Abdul Galil Karrar (Physics) University of Khartoum. Dismissed.**
- 36 Dr. 'Abdin Zain Al'Abdin (Agriculture) University of Khartoum. Arrested.**
- 37 Dr. Muhammad Rajab (Agriculture) University of Khartoum. Arrested. Tortured.**
- 38 Professor Daf'alla Badawi (Engineering Former Dean of Faculty) University of Khartoum. Dismissed.**
- 39 Muhammad Nour Al Din (Economics) University of Gezira. Dismissed.**
- 40 Dr. Yahia Beshir (Agriculture) University of Gezira. Dismissed. Former President of University of Gezira Teaching Staff Association.**
- 41 Dr. Babiker Badri (Science and Technology) University of Gezira. Dismissed**
- 42 Mr. Mustafa Adam (English) University of Gezira. Dismissed and refused an exit visa to UK to finish his PhD.**
- 43 Omar Fitaihabi (English) University of Gezira. Dismissed.**
- 44 Dr. Fadel Ali Karar (Economics) University of Gezira. Dismissed.**
- 45 Mr. Hag Mousa (Economics) University of Gezira. Dismissed.**
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- 46 Ibrahim Mohamed Abd Al-Rahim (Medicine) University of Gezira. Dismissed.**
- 47 Professor Sami Firijoun (Agricultural Science) Gezira University. Member of the executive committee of the Gezira University Teaching Staff Association. Dismissed for refusing to join the Popular Defense Force.**
- 48 Forty-five lecturers from Juba University who finished their postgraduate studies abroad and did not report to work were notified of disciplinary action (maximum penalty - dismissal) by notices in an advertisement in *Al-Soudan Al Hadith*, May 12, 1992, to take effect two weeks later. They are: Mutwakkil Jamal Ahmad, Muhammad Abdul Gadir, Alozaia Hakim, Tariq, Ahmad Abdul Raahman, Balla M. Sharif, Awad Haj Muhammad, Deng Dougern, Samuel Chang Jok, Rogatu Kassang, Henry Omai, Henry Wani, Lawrence Faustino, Bakri M. Sli, Juliano Moyang, Gerge Gad Mansour, Andrew Akon, Yusif Hussein Al Tayeb, Abdul 'Aal Al Hassan Al Idrisi, Ali Ahmad Al Sanusi, Abdul Rahman Ibrahim, Muhammad Abdul Salam Al Khidir, Alyoba Minsona, Sisi Adam Zakaria, Lonzio Onik, Izboni Yombik, Lomoli Manasa, Gismalla Abdul Wahab, Andrew Mayan, Ahmad Abdalla Hamadain, Santino Loro, Paul Laku Agani, Domazo Dot, Emilia Philip, Lino Nicholas, Kenneth Okeni, Alew Diba, Amrose Penny, George Borig, George Vez Lora, Lok Abotu, Agoni Mabut, Kamal Gasm Al Khaliq, Skobas Siquat, Mikaya Lamori.**

**Africa Watch has the names of seventeen female students (University of Gezira) who were subjected to humiliating public whipping (forty lashes each on the buttocks), on November 28, 1990, on the orders and under the supervision of Colonel Dr. Malii Ali Abd Al Qadir, at the "Al Farouq" camp of the Popular Defense Forces (the racehorse course) in Wad Medani. In addition, the following male students (University of Gezira) were subjected to humiliating public whipping (forty lashes each on the buttocks) in the same incident. Their hair was also shaved.**

- 1 Tariq M. Hamid**
- 2 Saif Al Din A. Rahman**
- 3 'Abdul Halim Isa Taiman**
- 4 Naza Hashim Muhammad**
- 5 Omar Ibrahim**
- 6 Amir Muhammad Hassan**
- 7 Abdel Nasser Osman**
- 8 Sami Y. I. 'Atabani**
- 9 Hassan Ali Sanhoury**
- 10 Faisal Sa'id**
- 11 'Awad Ali Olaish**
- 12 Osman**
- 13 Faisal Ishaq**
- 14 Munir Muhammad**
- 15 'Abd Al Wahid Adam**
- 16 Abdul Rahman Al Mahdi**
- 17 Ali Y. Al Shair**

**The following students have been killed:**

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- 1 Mr. Tariq Muhammad Ibrahim (shot dead when security forces occupied University of Khartoum campus in July 1991)**
- 2 Ms. Al Taya Ahmad (shot dead by security forces during a demonstration in December 1989)**
- 3 Mr. Bashir Al Tayeb Ibrahim (December 1989) stabbed by a NIF supporter on campus.**

*Africa Watch is a non-governmental organization created in May 1988 to monitor human rights practices in Africa and to promote respect for internationally recognized standards. Its Chair is William Carmichael. Its Vice-Chair is Alice Brown. Its Director is Rakiya Omaar; its Associate Director is Alex de Waal. Janet Fleischman and Karen Sorensen are Research Associates; Bronwen Manby is a Schell fellow; Anthony Levintow, Ben Penglase, and Urmi Shah are Associates.*

*Africa Watch is part of Human Rights Watch, an organization that also encompasses Americas Watch, Asia Watch, Helsinki Watch, Middle East Watch and the Fund for Free Expression. The Chair of Human Rights Watch is Robert L. Bernstein and the Vice-Chair is Adrian W. DeWind. Aryeh Neier is Executive Director of Human Rights Watch, the Deputy Director is Ken Roth; Holly J. Burkhalter is Washington Director, Susan Osnos is the Press Director and Gara LaMarche is Associate Director.*