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Sudan: Anniversary of the closure of national human rights organisations

A year following the closure of three national humanitarian and human rights organizations, Amnesty International today expressed its concerns about the continuing deterioration of the human rights situation in Sudan.

The three organisations, Khartoum Centre for Human Rights and Environmental Development (KCHRED), Amal Centre for the treatment and rehabilitation of victims of torture, and Sudan Social Development Organisation (SUDO) were closed down on 4 March 2009 after the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant against Sudanese President Omar Hassan Al Bashir.

At the same time as these closures occurred, 13 international humanitarian organizations had their permits revoked. The humanitarian crisis that many feared following the closure of humanitarian organizations was largely averted in Darfur and the transitional areas. However, the human rights situation did deteriorate in the immediate aftermath of these closures.

One year following the arrest warrant against President Al Bashir, ordinary civilians as well as human rights defenders remain at risk in Sudan. Since March 2009, Amnesty International has documented numerous cases of incommunicado detentions, extra-judicial executions, torture, and unfair trials. The perpetrators of these violations remain unpunished.

Human rights defenders play a vital role in monitoring, protecting and promoting human rights in Sudan, especially in light of the coming elections in April 2010 and the continuing conflicts in Darfur and the south of Sudan.

Amnesty International calls on the Government of Sudan to remove restrictions on national human rights and humanitarian organisations operating in Sudan.

Amnesty International also urges the government to immediately stop the harassment of human rights defenders and to allow them to peacefully exercise their rights to freedom of expression and association.

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