



UNMIS Press Statement

07 August 2008

Statement attributable to Mr. Ashraf Qazi, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General to Sudan, regarding the recent death sentences passed by the Counter Terrorism Courts against 30 individuals found guilty of participating in the May 10 attack by the Justice and Equality Movement on Omdurman.

The United Nations Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) has concerns that the judicial process may not have met international standards. According to information available to UNMIS, it would appear that the accused were only given access to lawyers after the trials began; confessions were obtained while the accused were held *incommunicado* and in the absence of legal counsel and the court did not investigate allegations of ill treatment, as requested by defence counsel, through proper medical examinations. In addition, UNMIS is concerned that the judicial process under the Anti Terrorist Act only allows for an extremely limited appellate process.

UNMIS recognizes the right, and the responsibility of the Government to prosecute and sentence those who committed criminal offences in the context of the attacks but calls on the Government to ensure compliance of proceedings with international legal standards. In capital punishment cases especially, the Government has an obligation to rigorously observe all fair trial guarantees set out in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights to which Sudan is a State party. These guarantees are an integral part of the Interim National Constitution and Bill of Rights. UNMIS, accordingly, urges the appeal court to thoroughly review the 30 death sentences in line with the Interim National Constitution and the Bill of Rights.

UNMIS also encourages Sudan to abolish capital punishment, and, in the meantime, establish a moratorium on executions as called for by the United Nations General Assembly in November 2007.

UNMIS Press Statements are posted on www.unmis.org

For further information, contact Brian Kelly, UNMIS Spokesperson. Phone: + (249) 912 39 22 70. Email: kellyb@un.org or Kouider Zerrouk. Deputy Spokesperson. Phone: + (249) 912 39 65 39. Email: Zerrouk@un.org