The Honorable Mohammed Bushara Dousa

Minister of Justice

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Khartoum, Sudan

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**Illegal Detention and Torture of Mr. Rashid Sheikh Eldin Abash**

Dear Sir:

International Rivers is an international civil society organization which works to protect river ecosystems and the rights of communities that depend on them. We have followed the plans of the Sudanese government to build the Merowe, Kajbar and Dal dams on the Nile, and the killings and human rights abuses that have been associated with these projects, with much concern since 2005.

In this letter, we wish to urgently take up the severe human rights abuses inflicted on Mr. Rashid Sheikh Eldin Abash. Mr. Abash is a Sudanese citizen and a peaceful activist for the rights of the Nubian people. He currently serves as Chairman of the Youth Committee Against the Dal and Kajbar Dams. Mr. Abash is 36 years old and married with two children.

We learned from sources in Sudan that on Tuesday, September 23, 2014, Mr. Abash was arrested by the Sudanese security forces, after these forces stormed his workplace and took his workers hostage. After Mr. Abash learned about this, he turned himself in exchange for the release of his workers. Unlike other detainees who were arrested around the same time, Mr. Abash has remained in detention since September 23. We understand that he is currently being held in Kober prison.

Several witnesses have testified that Mr. Abash is being exposed to severe and systematic torture by being beaten with solid sticks on his back and by being kept in painful physical positions for long periods of time. We have learned that he has also been continuously beaten during investigations.

Mr. Abash has been refused access to lawyers, and in spite of repeated requests, his family has not been allowed to visit him. His family has not been informed about the reasons for his arrest or the legal charges against him. Although he is suffering from chronic kidney problems, Mr. Abash is also being refused access to doctors.

The treatment of Mr. Rashid Sheikh Eldin Abash violates international law and the Sudanese constitution, and shames the reputation of the Sudanese government. We ask you to take the following measures without delay:

* Immediately stop the torture inflicted on Mr. Abash;
* Immediately offer Mr. Abash an independent medical examination and the medical treatment he requires;
* Immediately release Mr. Abash from detention or level legal charges against him, followed by a fair and public trial.

We appreciate your response about the measures your Ministry has taken in this case at the earliest. We are also informing the UN Commission on Human Rights, the embassies in Khartoum, the international human rights organizations and the management of Sinohydro, which has received a contract to build the Kajbar Dam, about Mr. Abash’s fate. We will not hesitate to take further steps to bring this case to international attention if necessary.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Dr. Peter Bosshard

Policy Director

International Rivers

Copies for:

* Mr. Michel Frost, UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders
* Embassies in Khartoum
* Amnesty International
* The Carter Center
* Frontline Defenders
* Human Rights Watch
* International Federation for Human Rights FIDH
* International Observatory Against Torture
* Robert F. Kennedy Center for Justice and Human Rights
* Sinohydro International