



The Law Society of Upper Canada | Barreau du Haut-Canada

July 4, 2016

President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281, Khartoum
Republic of Sudan

Office of the Treasurer

Osgoode Hall
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Toronto, Ontario
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Dear President:

Re: Harassment of lawyer Nabeel Adib Abdallah

I write on behalf of the Law Society of Upper Canada* to voice our grave concern over the harassment of lawyer Nabeel Adib Abdallah. When serious issues of apparent injustice to lawyers and the judiciary come to our attention, we speak out.

Nabeel Adib Abdallah is a prominent lawyer and rights activist. The Law Society has received reports that on 5 May 2016, Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) agents raided Nabeel Adib Abdallah's office, confiscating property and arresting several university students. The authorities have provided no justification for the raid and have not cited any specific charges, nor any other information about the removal of Nabeel Adib Abdallah's property. It is unclear whether Nabeel Adib Abdallah himself was also arrested at the scene.

The raid came after the Vice Chancellor of the University of Khartoum reportedly shut down the university indefinitely and dismissed 17 students for their involvement in human rights demonstrations. The students went to Nabeel Adib Abdallah's office in order to engage him to challenge the dismissal decision when they were arrested.

The Law Society of Upper Canada urges Your Excellency to consider Articles 16 and 23 of the United Nations' *Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers*. Article 16 states:

Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper

interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative, economic or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Moreover, Article 23 states:

Lawyers like other citizens are entitled to freedom of expression, belief, association and assembly. In particular, they shall have the rights to take part in public discussion of matters concerning the law, the administration of justice and the promotion and protection of human rights and to join or form local, national or international organizations and attend their meetings, without suffering professional restrictions by reason of their lawful action or their membership in a lawful organization.

The Law Society urges the government of Sudan to:

- a. put an end to all acts of harassment against Nabeel Adib Abdallah as well as other lawyers and human rights defenders in Sudan;
- b. guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Nabeel Adib Abdallah;
- c. guarantee all the procedural rights that should be accorded to Nabeel Adib Abdallah and other human rights lawyers and defenders in Sudan; and
- d. ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments.

Yours very truly,

Paul Schabas
Treasurer

**The Law Society of Upper Canada is the governing body for more than 50,000 lawyers and 8,000 paralegals in the province of Ontario, Canada. The Treasurer is the head of the Law Society.*

The mandate of the Law Society is to govern the legal profession in the public interest by upholding the independence, integrity and honour of the legal profession for the purpose of advancing the cause of justice and the rule of law.

cc:

Ambassador Mahomoud Fadl Abdelrasoul
354 Stewart Street
Ottawa, Ontario
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Alex Neve, Secretary General, Amnesty International Canada

Mary Lawlor, Executive Director, Front Line Defenders

Vincent Forest, Head of European Union Office, Front Line Defenders

Kenneth Roth, Executive Director, Human Rights Watch

Al-Tayeb Haroun, Chairman, Sudanese Bar Association

Adrie van de Streek, Executive Director, Lawyers for Lawyers

David F. Sutherland, Chair, Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

Yves Berthelot, President, Observatory for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders

Michel Forst, Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Gabriela Knaul, Special Rapporteur of the Human Council on the independence of judges and lawyers, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Sarah Smith, Human Rights and Rule of Law Policy Adviser, The Law Society of England and Wales