



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 28, 2014

Condemned Sudanese Christian Gives Birth in Prison, Won't Recant Faith

The Sudanese Christian woman under a death sentence for refusing to convert to Islam has given birth to a baby girl in the squalor of prison, but has reiterated that she will not renounce her faith in Christ.

Twenty-seven-year-old Meriam Yahia Ibrahim was convicted by a Muslim court April 30 of apostasy, as well as of adultery for marrying a Christian man, although she had been raised a Christian and had never embraced the Muslim faith. Her Muslim father abandoned the family and Ibrahim was raised by a Christian mother.



Ibrahim was eight months pregnant at the time of her conviction, and after refusing to convert to Islam was sentenced to death by hanging, as well as 100 lashes for the adultery conviction. "I am a Christian, and I have never been a Muslim," Ibrahim told Judge Abaas Al Khalifa in court. As an Islamic crowd shouted for the court to punish her, the judge responded, "The court sentences you to be hanged until you are dead."

Ibrahim had been confined to jail, along with her 20-month-old son, as she waited for the birth of her and husband Daniel Wani's second child. "I'm so frustrated, I don't know what to do," Wani said of his wife's death sentence. "I'm just praying."

After spending the past four months shackled to the floor of her cell, Ibrahim delivered her baby in the hospital wing of Sudan's Omdurman Federal Women's Prison in North Khartoum. "This is some good news in what has been a terrible ordeal for Meriam," Ibrahim's attorney, Mohamed Mustafa Elnour, told the U.K.'s *Daily Mail* newspaper. "I am planning to visit her with her husband Daniel later today. I think they are going to call the baby Maya."

Elnour noted that prison officials "didn't even take Meriam to a hospital. She just delivered inside a prison clinic. Neither her husband nor I have been allowed to see them yet."

Ibrahim's husband, who is a U.S. citizen, flew from New England to Khartoum to visit his wife, and was shocked to find her in shackles and swollen, and also to discover that Sudanese authorities would not release the couple's twenty-month-old son to him because of his Christian faith.

According to the attorney, Ibrahim told her husband during a rare visit that "if they want to execute me then they should go ahead and do it because I'm not going to change my faith. I refuse to change. I am not giving up Christianity just so that I can live." Her husband recounted that Ibrahim said, "I know I could stay alive by becoming a Muslim and I would be able to look after our family, but I need to be true to myself."

According to reports, Ibrahim's death sentence has been deferred for at least two years, supposedly to give time for the new child to be weaned.



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Meanwhile, the U.K. government has stepped into the situation, demanding that Sudan release Ibrahim to her family. “This barbaric sentence highlights the stark divide between the practices of the Sudanese courts and the country’s international human rights obligations,” said U.K. Foreign Office Minister Mark Simmonds, calling on the Islamic Sudanese government to respect Ibrahim’s right to freedom of religion.

In the United States, Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.) and Roy Blunt (R-Mo.) have called on Secretary of State John Kerry to take “immediate action and full diplomatic engagement to offer Meriam political asylum and secure her and her [children’s] safe release.”

A report by the U.S. Commission on Religious Freedom notes that conversion from Islam in Sudan “is a crime punishable by death,” and that “suspected converts to Christianity face societal pressures, and government security personnel intimidate and sometimes torture those suspected of conversion.”

Over 60 percent of the nation claims Islam as their faith, and President Omar al-Bashir has made a commitment to fully enforce Sharia law.

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council noted that back in 2007, Human Rights Watch pointed out the inhuman conditions in Sudan’s prisons — conditions that persist to the present. “Most inmates receive one meal a day — if they’re lucky — in squalid rooms infested by mosquitos,” Perkins wrote in a commentary on the situation faced by Meriam Yahia Ibrahim, her young son, and newborn daughter. “As if giving birth there weren’t horrifying enough, Meriam’s husband, who traveled from New England to Sudan to see her, has been denied access since his daughter was born.”

As for President Obama’s concern over the situation faced by the wife and children of a U.S. citizen, the White House “had more than enough time to throw a party in honor of homosexual activist Harvey Milk,” but hasn’t had “a spare second to demand the freedom of two of America’s youngest citizens,” wrote Perkins. “Just two months after relaxing the rules on asylum seekers with ‘loose ties’ to terrorists, the White House is content to leave two U.S. children in the custody of third-world radicals.”

Challenging his fellow citizens to make their voices heard for Ibrahim and her children, Perkins wrote that “if the hearts of the American people aren’t sympathetic to a toddler and newborn locked and brutalized behind bars, then our hearts have been hardened beyond hope.”



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