



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on June 24, 2014

Sudan Releases Christian Woman Condemned to Death

Note: Miriam Ibrahim was re-arrested barely 24 hours after being released. For a June 24 update, [click here](#).

Meriam Ibrahim, the Christian woman imprisoned in Sudan and condemned to death for refusing to convert to Islam, has been freed, along with the daughter she bore while in prison and the two-year-old son who had been with her during her confinement. Tina Ramirez of the Christian advocacy group Hardwired told [Fox News](#) that Ibrahim's attorney confirmed the 27-year-old Sudan-trained physician had been released on Monday, June 23.



As reported by [The New American](#), Ibrahim, whose Christian husband Daniel Wani is a U.S. citizen, was convicted by a Muslim court April 30 of apostasy, as well as of adultery for marrying a Christian man. Islam considers the relationship illicit, although Ibrahim has never practiced the Muslim faith and was raised by her mother as a Christian after her Muslim father abandoned the family.

Following her conviction, Ibrahim was given 15 days to recant her Christian faith and convert to Islam, and when she refused was sentenced to death by hanging, as well as 100 lashes for the adultery conviction. Before the sentence Ibrahim was forced to sit with a Muslim scholar who repeatedly tried to compel her to recant her faith. "I am a Christian, and I have never been a Muslim," she insisted to Judge Abaas Al Khalifa in court. The judge responded by sentencing Ibrahim "to be hanged until you are dead."

The judge ultimately postponed the execution for at least two years as she cared for her new baby. Earlier this year Ibrahim's husband 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 20-month-old son to him because of his Christian faith. According to her 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."

Since that time several governments had condemned the death sentence as barbaric and called on Sudan to respect Ibrahim's right to religious expression and to free her from custody. Even the Obama administration, customarily reticent to condemn a Muslim nation over human rights abuses, "strongly" condemned the sentence and urged Sudan "to meet its obligations under international human rights law. We call on the government of Sudan to respect Ms. [Ibrahim's] right to freedom of religion."

Two U.S. lawmakers, Senators Kelly Ayotte (R-N.H.) and Roy Blunt (R-Mo.), pressed 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."



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According to Fox News, Sudan's national news service, SUNA, first reported that Sudan's Court of Cassation in Khartoum had canceled the death sentence after defense lawyers presented their case against the harsh penalty, with the court ordering Ibrahim's release. That decision was followed by her freedom, with Ibrahim reportedly removed to a confidential location within Sudan. Her attorneys were scheduled to meet June 24 with representatives from the U.S. Embassy for her complete release from the country.

"This is a huge first step," said U.S. Representative Chris Smith (R-N.J.), chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights and International Organization Subcommittee. However, he warned, "the second step is that Ms. Ibrahim and her husband and their children be on a plane heading to the United States."

The American Center for Law and Justice, which had garnered over 320,000 online petition signatures asking for the release of Ibrahim and her children, also applauded the development, calling on the Obama administration to aid the family in re-settling in America. Ibrahim's "release from a Sudanese prison is a critical step toward securing her freedom and safety," said ACLJ Executive Director Jordan Sekulow. "We now call on the Obama Administration to examine all possibilities to ensure that Meriam and her two American children are granted safe passage and immediate legal status in the United States."

File image made from an undated video showing Meriam Ibrahim with her two children: AP Images



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