



Written by [Dave Bohon](#) on May 19, 2014

Sudanese Christian Woman Sentenced to Death by Islamic Judge

A Sudanese Christian woman has been sentenced to death for refusing to renounce her faith and “return” to Islam, reports [Morning Star News](#), which monitors the persecution of Christians around the world. Twenty-seven-year-old Meriam Yahia Ibrahim, who has a 20-month-old son and is eight months pregnant, 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 told the scholar as well as Judge Abaas Al Khalifa in court.

“The court has sentenced you to be hanged until you are dead,” Al Khalifa told Ibrahim, as an Islamic crowd shouted for the court to punish her.

“Ibrahim was born to a Sudanese Muslim father who disappeared from her life when she was six years old and an Ethiopian mother who was Ethiopian Orthodox,” reported *Morning Star News*. “Though her mother raised her as a Christian, Islamic law asserts that she was Muslim by birth because her father was Muslim.”

Mohamed Jar Elnabi, the attorney representing Ibrahim, told *Morning Star News* that the young expectant mother “is due to give birth any minute,” adding that in addition to waiting to be executed, she can expect to be flogged with 100 lashes “as soon as she recovers from childbirth.”

Ibrahim’s husband, Daniel Wani, a South Sudanese national as well as a U.S. citizen, told [CNN News](#) that he feels helpless as he watches his wife being mistreated and abused by the Sudanese government. “I’m so frustrated, I don’t know what to do,” he said. “I’m just praying.”

Elnabi told reporters that while Ibrahim’s predicament is serious, she remains “very strong and very firm. She is very clear that she is a Christian and that she will get out one day.”

However, the couple’s 20-month-old son, who is in prison with Ibrahim, is having a difficult time. “He is very affected from being trapped inside a prison from such a young age,” Elnabi told CNN. “He is always getting sick due to lack of hygiene and bugs.”

Meanwhile governments and international organizations have weighed in on Ibrahim’s predicament,



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demanding her release. “We call upon the government of Sudan to respect the right to freedom of religion, including one’s right to change one’s faith or beliefs, a right which is enshrined in international human rights law as well as in Sudan’s own 2005 Interim Constitution,” the embassies of the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and the Netherlands said in a joint statement. “We further urge Sudanese legal authorities to approach Ms. Meriam’s case with justice and compassion that is in keeping with the values of the Sudanese people.”

In a [separate statement, the Obama administration](#), usually 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.”

A spokesperson for Amnesty International said that the fact that “a woman could be sentenced to death for her religious choice, and to flogging for being married to a man of an allegedly different religion, is abhorrent and should never be even considered. ‘Adultery’ and ‘apostasy’ are acts which should not be considered crimes at all, let alone meet the international standard of ‘most serious crimes’ in relation to the death penalty.”

Meanwhile, the Sudanese government has been downplaying the seriousness of Ibrahim’s predicament, according to [All Africa News](#). The news site reported that the country’s parliamentary speaker, al-Fatih Izz Al-Din, insisted Ibrahim’s sentence is merely a “preliminary ruling” that can be appealed through the country’s judicial process.

A second Sudanese official echoed the position that Ibrahim was in no immediate danger, issuing a statement that appeared designed to distance the government from direct involvement in the court ruling and to counter backlash over charges of human rights abuses. “Sudan is committed to all human rights and freedom of faith granted in Sudan by the constitution and law,” insisted Foreign Ministry spokesman Abu-Bakr Al-Sideeg in a statement issued to Reuters. Sideeg added, however, that he fully trusted the integrity and independence of Sudan’s judiciary.



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