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## **SUDAN | Lawyers Appeal Meriam Ibrahim's Death Sentence**

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has learned that Meriam Yahia Ibrahim's lawyers have lodged an appeal against the Public Order Court's decision on May 11 to sentence Ibrahim to death for apostasy and 100 lashes for adultery.

Ibrahim was charged and sentenced for adultery and 'apostasy' (leaving Islam) under articles 146 and 126 of Sudan's Penal Code respectively. The Public Order Court in El Haj Yousif Khartoum, Sudan, chaired by Judge Abbas Khalifa, confirmed the sentence on May 15, after Ibrahim refused to renounce her faith.

The Christian mother, who is eight months pregnant, continues to be held at the Omdurman Federal Women's Prison along with her 20-month-old son, Martin Wani. After months of incarceration, Ibrahim's husband, Daniel Wani was able to visit her and their son, but only when accompanied by her lawyers.

Ibrahim's case has prompted an international outcry. In a joint statement, UN human rights experts have also condemned the sentence, stating that it is the right of every individual to "adopt, change or retain a religion of one's choice, and to manifest their religion in practice, observance and worship, as well as the right not to be subject to discrimination or coercion on religious grounds."

Ibrahim was born in western Sudan to a Sudanese Muslim father and an Ethiopian Orthodox mother. Her father left the family when she was six years old. She was subsequently brought up as a Christian by her mother. The case against Ibrahim began after Sudanese authorities were made aware of her marriage to Daniel Wani, a Christian with dual American and Sudanese citizenship. Ibrahim testified before the court on March 4 that she is a life-long Christian, producing her marriage certificate, where she is classified as Christian, as evidence. Three potential witnesses from western Sudan who went to court to testify of her lifelong adherence to Christianity were prevented from giving evidence.

CSW Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas says "CSW continues to call upon the Sudanese authorities to annul the inhumane and unwarranted sentence given to Meriam Ibrahim. Furthermore, we call for immediate release of Mrs. Ibrahim and her young son. Their continued imprisonment violates international statutes to which Sudan is a signatory as well as article 38 of the country's interim constitution which guarantees freedom of religion or belief for all and in particular states that "; no person shall be coerced to adopt such faith that he/she does not believe in, nor to practice rites or services to which he/she does not voluntarily consent." CSW calls on the international community to hold Sudan to its international obligations and to provisions contained within its constitution."

