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## **SUDAN | Authorities Demolish Church Building, Mosque Left Standing**

Sudanese authorities demolished the Church of Christ in Thiba Al Hamyida, North Khartoum on June 30, after giving the church's leaders 24 hour notice of the action. A mosque on the same plot of land was left standing.

After the Sunday service June 29 was interrupted by the authorities, who announced the planned demolition, the church's leader Rev. Kwa Shamal appealed to the North Khartoum Commissioner, providing evidence the Church of Christ was the legitimate owner of the land on which the church was built.

Morning Star news reported Abdel Aziz Omer, office director for the commissioner, informed Rev. Shamal the government intended to destroy the church since 2012 to make way for the construction of a hospital. The church building was destroyed while a mosque located on the same plot of land was allowed to stand.

Christians in Sudan have come under increasing pressure since the secession of South Sudan on January 9, 2011. In April 2013, the government announced new church licenses would no longer be issued. Since then the destruction of church buildings has continued unabated. Christians have also faced detention and interrogation by the National Intelligence and Security Services, with several non-Sudanese Christians being deported at short notice.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "It is deeply concerning that Christians in Sudan are experiencing increasing repression. The demolition of the Church of Christ, while a mosque in the same location was left untouched is not only a blatant act of discrimination, but also appears to be part of a strategy aimed at restricting the rights of religious minorities incrementally, and in violation of the Sudan's own constitution, which recognizes the nation as 'multicultural, multi ethnic, multi lingual and multi religious.' CSW calls on the Sudanese authorities to return the land and rebuild the Church of Christ in Thiba Al Hamyida, or alternatively, to compensate the church and allocate an equally viable location for a new building. Sudan must also fully guarantee the right to freedom of religion or belief for all its citizens, as per the Interim constitution and article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which Sudan is a signatory."