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SUDAN | Appeal Challenging Meriam Ibrahim's Acquittal Lodged

Christians Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) learned Meriam Ibrahim's alleged family has lodged an appeal to the Sudanese Supreme Court, challenging the Court of Appeal decision to quash her death sentence for apostasy and 100 lashes for adultery.

Although the appeal was lodged, the Supreme Court has yet to determine whether it will be accepted. Sudanese criminal procedures state that an appeal of a decision of the Appeal Court can be made by an interested party, but it is up to the Supreme Court to determine whether the individual has the necessary legal standing to do so. If the Supreme Court accepts the appeal, it will then review the Appeal Court decision. Ordinarily, this process can take up to three months.

On June 23, the Appeal Court overturned the decision of the Public Order Court in El Haj Yousif, Khartoum to sentence Ibrahim to death for apostasy and 100 lashes for adultery, as prescribed in articles 146 and 126 of Sudan's Penal Code. The Appeal Court also recognized Ibrahim's marriage to Daniel Wani and ordered her immediate release.

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 her alleged family members made Sudanese authorities aware of her marriage to Daniel Wani, a Christian with joint Sudanese and American citizenship. Morning Star news reported 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 Ibrahim's lifelong adherence to Christianity were prevented from giving evidence.

On June 24, one day after her acquittal and release from prison, Ibrahim and her husband Daniel Wani were detained by the National Intelligence and Security Services at Khartoum Airport and later arrested and charged with forgery and provision of false information under article 123 and 97 of the 1991 Criminal Code, due to alleged irregularities with her travel documents. Both Ibrahim and Wani are on bail pending further action on these charges. They are not permitted to leave the country while criminal charges are pending.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "We urge the prosecutor to drop the criminal charges against Mrs. Ibrahim and her husband, which have no legal basis, and to allow them to leave the country unhindered. CSW continues to call upon the Sudanese authorities to uphold the right to freedom of religion or belief for all its citizens, as guaranteed by article 38 of Sudan's own constitution as well as the international covenants to which Sudan is a signatory."

