CHRISTIAN SOLIDARITY WORLDWIDE USA
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS

10.1.15

SUDAN | CSW Calls for Strengthening, Renewal of Mandate

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) has called on UN Human Rights Council member states to strengthen and renew the mandate of the UN Independent Expert on Sudan by emphasizing the element of human rights monitoring and reporting.

CSW issued the call in an oral statement delivered at the 30th session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva on September 30, in which the organization also urged the international community to address the human rights situation in Sudan in a more comprehensive manner.

In the interactive dialogue with the UN Independent Expert on Sudan, Aristide Nononsi, CSW highlighted religious freedom violations in Sudan including the confiscation of church property and the use of litigation against Christians, as seen in the case of South Sudanese clergymen Rev. Yat Michael and Rev. Peter Reith, as well as the case of 10 women and girls charged with public indecency after leaving a church service in June 2015.

During the session, the Independent Expert called on the Sudanese government to amend article 152 of the Criminal Code, which gives the Public Order Police broad scope to define what constitutes indecent or immoral dress and which is often used to target Christian women. On Sept. 13, seven South Sudanese Christian women were arrested whille dining together in a popular restaurant in Khartoum and later found guilty of public indecency and fined $16 each. After their arrest, four members of the group were released on bail, but three were illegally denied bail.

CSW highlighted this issue and other human rights concerns in its submission to the Universal Periodic Review of Sudan, due in April 2016, at which the country's human rights record will be reviewed. CSW noted an increase in violations of fundamental human rights in Sudan since 2011, including freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association and further human rights violations committed in the conflict areas of Darfur, South Kordofan and Blue Nile.

CSW's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "The mandate of the Independent Expert on Sudan is an important part of monitoring and reporting on the human rights situation in the country to the UN Human Rights Council. Given the dire human rights situation in Sudan, we call for the strengthening and renewal of this mandate. The Sudanese government should also take immediate and concrete action towards the realization of human rights for its people. The repeal of Article 126 of the Criminal Code which criminalizes apostasy, and the reform of Article 152 on indecent dress, should be one of the first steps in towards that goal."