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SUDAN | Charges Against Czech National Underpin Case

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) can confirm that Czech Christian Petr Jašek is being tried jointly with Rev. Hassan Abduraheem, Rev. Kuwa Shamal and Abdulmonem Abdumawla in Sudan.

Jašek is charged with the propagation of false news (Article 66 of the Sudanese Criminal Code). He is also accused, along with Rev. Hassan Abduraheem, Rev. Kuwa Shamal and Abdulmonem Abdumawla, of at least seven crimes, including waging war against the state (Article 51 of the Sudanese Criminal Code) and espionage (Article 53), which carry the death penalty as the maximum sentence.

As with Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla, the case against Jašek centers on the provision of finances for the medical treatment of Ali Omer, a young man from Darfur who was injured in a demonstration in 2013. Jašek heard of Omer's plight during an international conference for Christian leaders in November 2015. Rev. Abduraheem and Rev. Shamal were also attending the conference, where Rev. Abduraheem was invited to speak about his work as a church leader in Sudan. During his presentation, Rev. Abduraheem showed a picture of Omer and mentioned that he had donated money toward his medical treatment. Jašek subsequently pledged to provide finances for Omer's treatment.

In December 2015, Jašek travelled to Khartoum and met Omer. The meeting was facilitated by Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla, who is a friend of Omer's and had been collecting finances for his medical treatment. Jašek donated \$5,000 toward Omer's medical treatment, which was signed for by Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla. As he was leaving Sudan, Jašek was searched at Khartoum Airport by NISS agents who found the receipt for \$5,000, signed by Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla, and arrested him. They also confiscated personal belongings, including his mobile phone, laptop and camera.

Nine days after Jašek's arrest, Rev. Abduraheem, Rev. Shamal and Abdumawla were also arrested by NISS officers. While Jašek, Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla remained in NISS detention, Rev. Shamal was conditionally released until May 2016, when he was re-arrested and held in the Attorney General's custody. Jašek, Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla were also transferred to the Attorney General's custody in May 2016. They were all charged in August 2016, and their trial is ongoing.

The prosecution alleges that the \$5,000 Jašek donated to Omer's treatment was in reality support for rebel movements in the South Kordofan, Blue Nile and Darfur regions. By framing the case in this manner, NISS has attempted to exploit the fact that Abduraheem and Shamal are originally from the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan, and Abdumawla is from Darfur. Rev. Shamal was not involved in fundraising for Omer's medical treatment but appears to have been included in the case due to his senior position in the Sudan Church of Christ, his relationship with Rev. Abduraheem and his ethnicity.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide's Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "The case against Rev. Hassan Abduraheem, Mr. Abdumawla, Rev. Kuwa Shamal and Mr. Petr Jašek is an example of NISS's manipulation of the criminal justice system to harass ethnic and religious minorities. The evidence clearly shows that Rev. Abduraheem, Mr. Abdumawla and Mr. Jašek attempted to provide medical care for Mr. Omer. As a consequence of their acts of kindness, these men have been detained in terrible conditions and are now enduring an unjust trial. Rev. Kuwa Shamal, meanwhile, is being targeted simply because of his position as a senior church leader, his ethnicity and relationship to Rev. Abduraheem. We urge everyone who is as concerned as we are about this grave injustice to join us in campaigning to see these men set free. CSW urges the government of Sudan to drop the charges against these men without conditions or delay. We also call for a review of NISS's powers and for the end of targeting religious and ethnic minorities in Sudan."