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SUDAN | Trial Resumes for Four Men After Three Week Recess

The trial of Rev. Hassan Abduraheem, Rev. Kuwa Shamal, Petr Jašek and Abdulmonem Abdumawla resumed in Sudan on Oct. 17 after a three-week recess.

During the hearing, the prosecution presented the case investigator as its first witness and questioned him on the evidence allegedly found against the men. The legal team representing the men has been concerned by what they see as unnecessary delays in the case, with several postponements and adjournments in the trial so far. The next hearing is scheduled Oct. 24.

The men are charged jointly with 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.

The case against Rev. Abduraheem, Jašek and Abdumawla, 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. The prosecution alleges that the \$5,000 Jašek donated towards 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, the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) has attempted to exploit the fact that Reverends 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 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, "We remain concerned by the unjust detention and trial of Reverends Hassan Abduraheem and Kuwa Shamal, Mr. Petr Jasek and Mr. Abdulmonem Abdumawla. The unwarranted delays in the trial, including the three week adjournment, have resulted in the men being held in prison for longer than is necessary. We urge the government of Sudan to drop the charges against them without condition or delay. We also call for a review of NISS's powers and for the end to the targeting of religious and ethnic minorities in Sudan."