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## **SUDAN | Reverend Released from Prison**

Rev. Kuwa Shamal, one of four men on trial in Sudan for national security-related crimes, was released from prison Jan. 2 after the trial judge concluded there was no evidence against him and dismissed the charges.

The judge confirmed the charges against Rev. Hassan Abduraheem, Petr Jašek and Abdulmonem Abdumawla, whose trial is set to continue. A hearing has been scheduled for Jan. 9 when the defense teams will present their cases.

The case against the men centers on the provision of funds for the medical treatment of Ali Omer, a young man from Darfur who was injured in a demonstration in 2013. After learning of Omer's plight, Jašek travelled to Khartoum in December 2015 to meet him and donate \$5,000 toward his treatment. The meeting was facilitated by Rev. Abduraheem, who Jašek met at an international conference in November 2015, and Abdumawla, who is a friend of Omer's and had been collecting funds for his treatment.

As he was leaving Sudan, Jašek was searched at Khartoum Airport by National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) agents who found a receipt for the \$5,000 donation, signed by Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla. Jašek was arrested and his personal belongings confiscated, including his mobile phone, laptop and camera.

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 Rev. Abduraheem and Rev. Shamal are originally from the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan, and Abdumawla is from Darfur.

The trial, which started in August 2016 had been subject to several postponements and delays. On Dec. 26, the prosecution called their final witness and concluded their case. On Dec.

28, the trial judge questioned the four defendants and adjourned the proceedings in order to decide whether the trial should continue.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide's (CSW's) Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said, "CSW welcomes the judge's decision to release Rev. Shamal after finding no evidence against him. However, we are disappointed that the trial of Rev. Abduraheem, Mr. Jašek and Mr. Abdumawla continues despite being based on the same evidence that was deemed to be insufficient in Rev. Shamal's case. In reality, none of them have committed the serious crimes with which they have been charged. We urge the Sudanese government to ensure the immediate and unconditional release of these men, who have been detained since December 2015, simply for an act of kindness."