



1.30.17

SUDAN | Rev. Abduraheem, Two Others Sentenced

The trial judge in the case of Rev. Hassan Abduraheem, Petr Jašek and Abdumonem Abdumawla found them guilty of a number of charges, including espionage, a national security crime.

On Jan. 29, Judge Osama Ahmed Abdulla found Czech national, Jašek, guilty of espionage and sentenced him to life imprisonment. Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla were found guilty of espionage and abatement and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment.

Jašek also received a three and a half years imprisonment and was fined approximately \$15,000 for entering and photographing military areas; inciting hatred between sects; propagation of false news; entering the country illegally; and violating Articles 8 and 23 of Sudan's Volunteer Act.

In addition to the 10-year sentence for abatement and espionage, Rev. Abduraheem and Abdumawla were sentenced to two years imprisonment for inciting hatred between sects and for propagation of false news. The sentences will be served consecutively. Lawyers representing the men intend to appeal the verdict and sentences. In the meantime, the men remain in Al-Huda prison in Omdurman.

The case further illustrates the politicization of the criminal justice system by the National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) which, under the pretext of investigating national security crimes, has brought charges against members of the political opposition, human rights defenders and leaders of minority religions, as occurred in the case of Reverends Yat Michel and Peter Reith in 2015.

The verdict comes weeks after the outgoing Obama administration confirmed the lifting of some U.S. financial sanctions imposed on Sudan since 1997. The controversial decision was made in

recognition of perceived improvements in Darfur and the two conflict areas, including in humanitarian access.

The case against the three men centers on the provision of \$5,000 for the medical treatment of Ali Omer, a Darfuri student who was severely injured during a student demonstration in 2013. The prosecution alleged the \$5,000 donated by Jašek for 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 attempted to exploit the fact that Rev. Abduraheem and a former co-defendant, Rev. Shamal, are from the Nuba Mountains in South Kordofan, while Abdumawla is from Darfur.

Christian Solidarity Worldwide's Advocacy Director Joel Edwards said, "We are profoundly dismayed by this verdict. The serious charges against these men were wholly unwarranted, and the excessive sentences are unjustified, given the paucity of evidence against them. Mr. Jasek, Rev. Abduraheem and Mr. Abdumawla are not spies; they were simply driven by compassion to source finance for the medical treatment of a man whose injuries are so severe that he requires ongoing medical care. We call for the annulment of the verdict and the immediate release of these three men. In addition we urge the Sudanese authorities once again to undertake a review of the sweeping powers exercised by the NISS, and to end the targeting of ethnic and religious minorities."