



International Commission
against the Death Penalty

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Statement by the International Commission against the Death Penalty on Sudan: Meriam Yehya Ibrahim, sentenced to death for apostasy.

The International Commission against the Death Penalty (ICDP) condemns the death sentence passed against a Sudanese national Meriam Yehya Ibrahim, 27, by a court in Khartoum, Sudan, on charges of apostasy.

On 11 May 2014, the court reportedly sentenced Ms Ibrahim, a graduate of Sudan University's school of medicine, on charges of apostasy and adultery under Article 126 and Article 146, respectively, of Sudan's Criminal code. Reports reaching ICDP suggest that the court also nullified her marriage with Daniel Wani, a US national of South Sudanese origin and gave her three days to renounce her Christian faith under provisions of Article 126.

According to Ms Ibrahim, she was raised as an Orthodox Christian, her mother's religion, because her father, a Muslim, was reportedly absent during her childhood.

Following her refusal to recant her Christian faith, a judge of the Public Order Court in El Haj Yousif Khartoum, confirmed the death sentence by hanging on Meriam Yehya Ibrahim on 15 May. She was also sentenced to 100 lashes by the same court after being convicted of the charge of adultery.

Ms Ibrahim was initially arrested and charged with adultery in August 2013. The court added the charge of apostasy in February 2014 when Ms Ibrahim asserted that she was a Christian and not a Muslim. She has, since February 2014, been detained together with her 20 month old son Martin at Omdurman women's prison near Khartoum. On 27 May, she gave birth to a daughter in prison. According to reports, Meriam Yehya Ibrahim is shackled 24 hours a day and does not receive proper medical treatment.

The date of the execution has not yet been confirmed. According to the Criminal Code, the execution of a woman could take place two years after giving birth and nursing the child. A government spokesperson has been quoted as saying that Ms Ibrahim could appeal against the ruling at a higher court.

"By sentencing Meriam Yehya Ibrahim to death on charges of apostasy, the Sudanese authorities have violated its international commitments as a State Party to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its own Constitution that guarantees complete freedom to worship a religion of one's choosing. ICDP and I urge Sudanese authorities not to execute Ms. Ibrahim.



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We further call on the Government of Sudan to stop any further executions, to commute all death sentences to terms of imprisonment and declare an official moratorium on executions as a first step towards abolition of capital punishment in line with United Nations General Resolutions adopted in 2007, 2008, 2010 and 2012,” said ICDP President Federico Mayor.

In 2013, Sudanese authorities had reportedly carried out at least 21 executions and imposed at least 29 death sentences, though reports suggest many more people were sentenced to death by its courts.

ICDP further calls on the Government of Sudan to join some 160 countries from all regions of the world who have, according to the United Nations, abolished the death penalty or do not execute – having recognized that modern justice systems can protect the public from crime without the irrevocable and cruel nature of the death penalty and the constant risk of executing an innocent person.

Federico Mayor
President of the International Commission
against the Death Penalty

Background

ICDP was founded in Madrid in October 2010. The Commission is composed of 15 persons of high international standing from all regions of the world who act with total independence and neutrality and work under its President Mr Federico Mayor. ICDP opposes the death penalty under any circumstances believing that it violates the right to life enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Commission promotes the abolition of capital punishment in law in those states that observe a de facto moratorium on the use of the death penalty and promotes moratoriums on executions in states that rarely use the death penalty. In states that continue to carry out executions, ICDP urges strict adherence to international standards. The Commission works with the United Nations and other international and regional organizations, governments and nongovernmental organizations to further the abolition of capital punishment worldwide. The work of the ICDP is supported by a diverse group of 18 states from all regions of the world that are committed to abolition of the death penalty. Its secretariat is based in Geneva.