



HUDO Centre

STATEMENT

For Immediate release (8th November 2017)

SUDAN GOVERNMENT INTERVENES IN CHRISTIAN'S WORSHIP

On 22nd October 2017, Public Order Police arrested five Christian leaders from Christ Church in Elthawra of Omdurman. This incident (arrest) came after the police had forcefully obstructed church members from worship.

Since 27th May 2017, there was agreement between the executive committee and the opposing group in the Christ church on the manner in which worship time was constituted for each of them. The executive committee is the elected committee by the church's followers while the opposition group is associated to the ministry of religious affairs which consists of five pastors with some followers.

On Sunday 22th October 2017, church members gathered for prayers at Christ church in Althawra (29) at the agreed time but they were locked outside by the police. The police blocked them on grounds that, there was a resolution issued by the ministry rejecting the agreement and ordering members of this church to worship under the nominated pastor by opposition group. The church members together with their pastors remained on the church yard up to the time when the opposition group came and opened the church. Then, the two groups entered the church and worshipped separately. At 1:00 PM, soon after prayers, a police officer from Althawra police station ordered five church leaders including executive committee members to report to the police station. Upon their arrival, the police officer filed a case against the five arrested church leader under article 77 of Sudan Penal Code - 1991 (Public nuisance) and detained them. The arrested church leaders were:

1. Pastor/ Ayoub Telian, the president of the executive committee of Sudanese Christ church.
2. Pastor/ Ali hakim, the sponsor of Elthawra (29) Christ church.
3. Pastor/ Imbrator Hamad Badur.



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4. The missionary/ Mr. Habeil Ibrahim Eltahir.

5. Mr. Abdelbagi Tutu Korey, member of the executive committee of Sudanese Christ Church.

They were released on the same day at 10:00 PM on police bond (bail) and a court trial was scheduled for 31st October 2017 in Althawra court. All the five arrested church leaders were attended the trial scheduled date while the complainant/ plaintiff (the policeman) was absent. One of the defendants' lawyers informed **HUDO** that the judge offered an arrangement (deal) of discharging the case if the five defendants agreed by signing not to act in the same manner. The offer was entirely rejected by the defendants. Then the judge postponed court to 15th November 2017.

HUDO Centre's executive director Bushra Gamar commented that *"We cannot take this case in isolation from many previous cases concerning the oppression and infringement of Christians' rights by Sudan government. It is a deliberate process in which the current regime has created churches management department headed by Muslims at the ministry of religions intervening in Christians basic rights of worship while leaving the Sudanese Church Council with the secondary role. That aside, the ministry intended to support small groups against the legitimate committees neglecting the will of majority. Nevertheless, the court offering a dismissal case deal in the absence of the complainant"*

HUDO Centre is very concerned about Christians' right of worship. We call upon;

- The Sudanese community to support the Sudanese Christians and to carry out a campaign in protecting the freedom of worship.
- The supporters and activists to attend the next court session.
- The international community and embassies in Sudan to put more pressure on Sudan government to stop targeting Christians.

END: For any further information please contact hudo2009@gmail.com