

Christian Mother On Death Row for Her Faith Forced to Give Birth in Sudanese Prison

Meriam Yahia Ibrahim, a Christian mother who, on May 15, was sentenced to 100 lashes and death on charges of adultery and apostasy, gave birth to her second child on the morning of her 100th day in prison.

Denied access to a private medical center, Ibrahim was forced to give birth in the hospital wing of the federal women's prison, which is situated in Khartoum's twin city, Omdurman, Sudan, early Tuesday morning. The baby is "said to be healthy," according to the *Daily Mail*.

According to CNN, Daniel Wani, Ibrahim's husband, a United States citizen and [resident of New Hampshire](#), was barred from witnessing the birth of his first daughter, whom they have reportedly named Maya. Wani's firstborn son remains imprisoned with Ibrahim. Wani says Meriam has been shackled to the floor in her group cell for the entirety of her and her son's 100-day detention, as of the day of this release.

In speaking about the birth, one of Ibrahim's defense lawyers, Elshareef Ali Elshareef Mohammed, told the *Telegraph*, "They didn't even take Meriam to a hospital—she just delivered inside a prison clinic."

Ibrahim was initially arrested and arbitrarily detained, without charge or trial, on February 17 by Public Order Police, a special law enforcement unit tasked with enforcing Sudan's Shariah-inspired 1991 Public Order Code. On March 4, Ibrahim was charged with adultery and apostasy (leaving Islam) by the El Haj Yousif Public Order Court in Khartoum. Ibrahim was convicted of both charges May 11, at which time she was allotted three days to recant her Christian faith, which she

refused to do.

The daughter of a Muslim father who left her and her mother at age 6, Ibrahim, who was raised an Orthodox Christian and is now a practicing Catholic, is considered a Muslim in the eyes of Sudanese law and is therefore accountable to the Public Order Code, which is not supposed to apply to “peoples of the book”—Christians and Jews.

On May 15, Ibrahim refused to recant her Christian faith, [stating](#), “I am a Christian, and I will remain a Christian.” The presiding judge, Abbas al-Khaleefa, then sentenced Ibrahim to 100 lashes for adultery and to death for apostasy. Judge al-Khaleefa granted the defense 15 days to appeal the decision and made clear the state’s intent to pursue its execution of the sentences following the birth of her second child.

Ibrahim’s defense team, provided by Justice Center Sudan, a Khartoum-based nonprofit, submitted a letter of appeal to the Khartoum Court of Appeals on Thursday.

International Christian Concern’s (ICC) regional manager for Africa, Cameron Thomas, says his group is incredibly relieved to hear that Maya is reportedly healthy, following her mother being forced to give birth in a Sudanese prison for refusing to recant her Christian faith.

“We remain concerned for Meriam and the baby, as we know the conditions of the prison are unfit for a newly born child and a mother recovering from labor,” Thomas says. “We’ve released a petition ([to sign, click here](#)) calling on the government of Sudan to immediately and unconditionally release Meriam. ICC continues to advocate on Meriam’s behalf, remaining in constant contact with those on the ground in Khartoum.

“Ultimately, this is an egregious case in which an American citizen has now been born in a Sudanese prison because of her mother’s faith. One has to ask, how much further is the Sudanese state willing to go to prove it’s intent to make

Sudan 'purely Islamic'?"