

Pastors Face Possible Death Sentence in Sham Jihadi Trial

Recently, the trial of two Christian pastors facing a possible death sentence in Sudan for their faith began.

Pastors Yat Michael Ruot and Peter Yein Reith are on trial on a number of trumped-up national security charges and for “offending Islamic beliefs” because of their Christian faith. Their supposed “crimes” could lead to the death penalty.

Reports from the trial indicate that Sudan’s Islamist National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS) struggled to produce any viable evidence against the two Christian pastors. Yet the judge has continued the case until June 15 to allow the NISS to put together more evidence against the pastors.

According to reports:

A representative for Sudan’s National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) testified that the pastors were collecting information for a human rights group, citing as evidence a map of Sudan, especially the Darfur Region, that was found on their personal computers, the attorney said.

“But anybody can go to the Internet and download a map of country in the world,” he said. “It is not a crime.” ...

The defense attorney said the judge indicated the prosecution needed more time to prepare their case.

“The judge said, ‘It is a process, normally a case is not ruled on in one day—it takes at least 10 days for one case,’” he said.

It’s nothing more than a jihadi sham trial. Sudan is using this trial to not only persecute these two pastors but to

torment and scare the Christian community into silence—to eradicate Christianity from Sudan.

Like in the case of Christian mom Meriam Ibrahim, the charges Pastors Ruot and Reith face in Sudan could lead to the death penalty. Thankfully, Meriam is free today because hundreds of thousands of people across the globe stood up and demanded her freedom.

As we reported last week, the ACLJ is mobilizing our international offices to fight for Pastors Ruot and Reith's freedom. Already critical leaders in defending human rights are speaking out.

The United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released the following statement demanding the immediate release of Pastors Ruot and Reith:

"The trial of Revs. Michael and Reith is a clear example of the Sudanese government's persecution of the country's small Christian community. They are on trial simply for demanding and urging their congregation to remain strong in the face of restrictions on their constitutional right to religious freedom," said USCIRF Chair Dr. Katrina Lantos Swett. "USCIRF urges the U.S. government and international community to publicly speak out against the trial, demand the pastors' immediate release, and press the Sudanese government to abide by its constitutional and international commitments to respect religious freedom for all."

It is time for the world to speak out. Pastors Ruot and Reith were secretly detained and charged, cut off from their families. They could be hung for their Christian faith. We must not be silent.