

Sudan Playing Games Over Death-Row Mom Meriam Ibrahim's Release

Conflicting reports have emerged regarding the current status of Sudan's "death-row mother" Meriam Ibrahim's lack of freedom to leave Khartoum for a new life with her husband and children at his American home.

On Thursday Reuters reported that the lawsuit brought by Ibrahim's Sudanese Muslim father was dropped. The lawyer handling the case said this move could allow her to depart for the United States—where her husband, Daniel, is a dual U.S. citizen.

Then *Sudan Tribune* reported on Friday that Ibrahim's family filed another lawsuit, this time seeking to annul her marriage to her Christian husband, Wani. This is a continued attempt to keep her from leaving Sudan, and an annulment of Wani and Ibrahim's marriage would also mean the children would not be legally recognized as Wani's children.

Early last week, Ibrahim's family filed a lawsuit seeking to prove the biological link between Ibrahim and her Muslim father, but the suit was dropped without explanation by the family. A lawyer acting on their behalf, Abdel Rahman Malek, told Reuters news agency: "We are no longer proceeding with the lawsuit," but declined to give any reason.

The first scheduled hearing of the case would have been Thursday at the Khartoum Family Court.

The U.S. Department of State has told World Watch Monitor that, "the government of Sudan has assured us of the family's continued safety." It went on to say in an email, "The Department of Homeland Security has informed us that Ms. Ishag

[Meriam Ibrahim] and her children have all the documents they need to enter the United States as soon as the government of Sudan allows them to exit the country.”

It was relatives of Meriam who originally accused her of adultery by marrying a Christian. □

WWM has several times reported the story of her death sentence from the court in Khartoum and its world-wide condemnation; we have also highlighted the general plight of Sudan’s Christians.

Ibrahim’s harrowing journey began with arrest in September 2013 before being found guilty of apostasy, sentenced to hang and then giving birth to her second child while imprisoned. She was finally freed on June 26 and is now staying at the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum.

Ibrahim and her family are living in a makeshift home sleeping on four camp beds in the Embassy’s library. Despite these cramped conditions, her stay has prevented the Sudanese court from serving papers, which could have contributed to the breakdown of the latest case against her.

The Sudanese government does not appear to have formally dropped its accusation of “incorrect travel documents.” Ibrahim is a Sudanese citizen, but the U.S. Embassy assisted her to try to leave Khartoum using South Sudanese travel papers, as her South Sudanese husband, Daniel Wani, now lives in the U.S.). Ibrahim was allowed to leave police custody after a brief detention on June 26 over the alleged “forged” papers.

Further good news for Ibrahim’s family was recently reported by the U.K.’s *Daily Mail*—that her baby girl was not injured, despite being born while her mother was shackled to the floor.

Ibrahim, herself a doctor, feared that being constrained during birth could cause irreparable damage to her daughter,

Maya. It was feared that, like her father Daniel who has muscular dystrophy, she might not be able to walk. An ultrasound in the coming weeks is hoped to give Maya the all clear.