

Sudanese Government Detains Over 50 Christians

At least 55 Christians have been detained by the Sudanese government for approximately two weeks without charge.

According to CSW's sources, the group, which has no political affiliations and includes church leaders, has been falsely accused of receiving money from foreign countries, including Israel.

The arrests are the latest development in a wave of repression that began toward the end of last year targeting Christians working in voluntary organizations, and that has reportedly resulted in the deportations of around 100 foreign workers, while a number of Sudanese Christians have been detained for questioning by the security services.

According to local reports, the repression was preceded by a media campaign against "Christianisation," and was accompanied by the closure of a number of Christian-affiliated schools, colleges and training centres.

There have been concerns about increasing pressure on churches in Sudan since the creation of South Sudan in 2011. President Omar Hassan al-Bashir has repeatedly stated that Sudan's new constitution would be 100 percent Islamic. The president has also claimed that "all parties, religious sects and Sufis" would be represented in the constitutional drafting committee; however, no further details have been given about its progress.

CSW's Advocacy Director Andrew Johnston said, "CSW is deeply concerned at these arbitrary arrests and news of an escalating crackdown on Christian citizens in Sudan. We urge the Sudanese government to release these prisoners and end its campaign of harassment against the Christian community."

“We also urge the government once again to undertake broad consultations during the drafting of the new constitution and to ensure that it recognises the rights of all Sudanese citizens, to freedom of religion or belief, as outlined in Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), to which Sudan is a signatory.”