

Mr Joe Costello  
Minister for Trade and Development  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade  
Iveagh House  
70 St Stephen's Green  
DUBLIN 2

16 May 2014

Dear Mr Costello,

I write in response to the shocking news of the death sentence for apostasy passed yesterday on Ms Meriam Yahia Ibrahim in Sudan. Ms Ibrahim is eight months pregnant and is being held in prison with her 20-month-old son.

The verdict has caused deep concern within the Christian community in Sudan, which has been under increasing pressure since the secession of South Sudan in 2011. Government intimidation and harassment has forced hundreds of thousands of Christians of South Sudanese origin out of Sudan. Persecution of Christians includes arrest, interrogation and detention without charge, demolition of churches, closure of Christian institutions, confiscation of Christian literature and deportation of foreign Christian workers.

As Sudan has been in receipt of emergency aid from Ireland (channelled through United Nations agencies), I ask that you join other members of the international community in making a public statement about the matter calling for the annulment of the inhumane and unwarranted sentence and for the immediate release of Ms Ibrahim and her son, who is being held in violation of Article 37 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Under the Sudanese constitution, Ms Ibrahim is entitled to freedom of religion or belief. Consequently, this sentence amounts to a violation of the Sudanese Constitution and of international conventions to which Sudan is party, including the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

I also ask that you convey these concerns to the Sudanese Ambassador accredited to Ireland, who is based in London.

Yours sincerely,

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David Turner  
(Director)

