

The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition calls for death penalty charges to be dropped against Jalila Khamis Koko in Sudan

14 December 2012

On 13 December, Sudanese teacher and activist Jalila Khamis Koko was officially charged on five criminal counts. She faces the death penalty. The Women Human Rights Defenders International Coalition (WHRD IC) condemns the charges and prolonged detention of teacher and activist Jalila Khamis Koko in Sudan.

Jalila Khamis Koko was formally charged with five criminal counts on 13 December. Two charges fall under the category of crimes against the state, and carry the death penalty, in accordance with Sudan's 1991 Criminal Code: "undermining the constitutional system" (article 50) and "waging war against the state" (article 51). The other charges are: "participation in the execution of a criminal conspiracy" (article 21), "exiting hatred against sects or between them" (article 64) and "publication of false news" (article 66). Her next court date is scheduled for 18 December.

Shortly after being charged, she was transferred to the Khartoum north courts. Jalila Khamis Koko had previously been held in prolonged administrative detention under the authority of the prosecutor in charge of crimes against the state. She was arrested on 15 March 2012, and spent the first three months in solitary confinement in the National Security Service (NSS) detention centre. During this time, her physical health has considerably deteriorated.

Jalila Khamis Koko is a member of the opposition party Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N), which was banned by the Government of Sudan in September 2011. She is a member of the Nuba ethnic group from Southern Kordofan. The detention of Jalila Khamis Koko appears to be part of a pattern of detention of SPLM-N activists and intellectuals, as well as of people of Nuba descent.

The Coalition is very concerned about Jalila Khamis Koko, who is held solely for her humanitarian work and for the peaceful expression of her views.

We demand the government of Sudan to:

Release Jalila Khamis Koko immediately and unconditionally;

Drop all charges against Jalila Khamis Koko;

Ensure Jalila Khamis Koko is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated;

Allow Jalila Khamis Koko access to her lawyers and family;

Stop the harassment and intimidation of SPLM-N activists and intellectuals, as well as people of Nuba descent.