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## **Sudanese teacher faces the death penalty**

Sudanese teacher and activist Jalila Khamis Koko was officially charged on five criminal counts on 13 December, two of which carry the death penalty.

A member of the opposition party Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM-N), she has been detained, without charge, for the last nine months.

On 15 September she had been summoned by the prosecutor in charge of crimes against the state and by the Khartoum Criminal Court.

Two charges, “undermining the constitutional system” and “waging war against the state” fall under the category of crimes against the state, and carry the death penalty.

The others relate to “participation in the execution of a criminal conspiracy”, “exciting hatred against sects or between them” and “publication of false news”. Her next court date is scheduled for 18 December.

Jalila Khamis Koko, a member of the Nuba ethnic group from Southern Kordofan, was first arrested on 15 March 2012 by agents of the National Security Services and spent the first three months of her detention in solitary confinement.

She was later transferred to the Omdurman prison in Khartoum, where she has been detained ever since. Prior to her arrest Jalila was volunteering to provide humanitarian support to internally displaced people from Southern Kordofan.

In June 2011, Khamis Koko appeared in a youtube video in which she denounced the conditions in conflict-affected areas of Southern Kordofan and called for a cease fire.

“Amnesty International believes that Jalila Khamis Koko is being detained because of her humanitarian work and her peaceful expression of her views. She should be released immediately and unconditionally” said Audrey Gaughran, Amnesty International’s Africa Director.

During her confinement her health has deteriorated and she is currently suffering from high blood pressure due to stress.

Amnesty International is urging the authorities to drop all charges against Khamis Koko, to ensure that she is not tortured or otherwise ill-treated and to allow access to her lawyers and family.

“Jalila Khamis Koko’s detention appears to be part of a pattern of harassment and detention of activists from the Nuba Mountains and members of the SPLM-N - this needs to stop immediately,” adds Gaughran.

In a recent public statement Amnesty International documented how Sudanese security forces and military intelligence have carried out a campaign of arrests, targeting people from the Nuba ethnic group in Southern Kordofan. The organization recorded that over 90 people, including 32 women, were arrested in Kadugli and Dilling in November 2012.

Arbitrary arrest of individuals on the basis of their ethnicity violates international law, as does arbitrary detention without bringing detainees before a court and without allowing them access to legal representation or to their families, placing them at risk of torture and other ill-treatment.

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