

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

The Honorable John Kerry  
Secretary of State  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20520

June 19, 2014

Dear Mr. Secretary:

We urge you to further prioritize the case of Meriam Yahya Ibrahim Ishag, a Sudanese Christian who was sentenced to death for apostasy and 100 lashes for adultery. We believe that Mrs. Ibrahim's right to freedom of religion was violated and that she should be immediately and unconditionally released. Furthermore, we request that the U.S. State Department, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, review granting Mrs. Ibrahim Significant Public Benefit Parole, asylum, or refugee status, as appropriate. In short, we urge that every legal means necessary be exhausted to ensure that she and her young children are provided safe haven.

We also ask that you expedite the process of registering her children, Martin and Maya, as U.S. citizens since their father and Mrs. Ibrahim's husband, Daniel Wani, is a U.S. citizen. It is critical that the U.S. work diplomatically at the highest levels to secure Mrs. Ibrahim's release and that necessary steps be taken to ensure her safety if in fact her freedom is granted.

In March 2014, Mrs. Ibrahim was charged with apostasy, despite asserting she was a Christian, as well as with adultery for being married to a non-Muslim man. According to Mrs. Ibrahim, she was raised a Christian, the religion of her mother, because her father was absent since her childhood. Sudan's Judiciary maintains that Mrs. Ibrahim is a Muslim because her father was a Muslim, therefore, her marriage to a Christian and alleged "conversion" is classified as a criminal act under Sudan's strict religious laws.

On May 11, 2014, Mrs. Ibrahim was given the death sentence for apostasy by the Public Order Court in El Haj Yousif, Khartoum. She was also sentenced to 100 lashes for adultery for marrying a Christian. She was given three days to recant and follow Islam. On May 15<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Ibrahim refused to convert to Islam and her death sentence was consequently confirmed.

In Sudan's 1991 Criminal Code, apostasy can result in the death penalty. Apostasy, however, is not a criminal offense under article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), of which Sudan is a state party. Furthermore, the provisions of article 18 of the ICCPR are enshrined in Sudan's interim constitution, which states that "no person shall be coerced to adopt such faith, that he/she does not believe in."

Mrs. Ibrahim and Mr. Wani have a twenty-month-old son, Martin, who is currently in prison with his mother and a daughter, Maya, who was born May 27, 2014. According to Sudan's courts, Martin and Maya are considered Muslims and their father will very likely not obtain custody of them if their mother remains imprisoned or worse.

We understand that Mr. Wani is currently in the process of registering Martin as a U.S. citizen at Embassy Khartoum. Mr. Wani has made multiple representations to the U.S. Embassy in Khartoum since October 2013 about his concern for his wife's previous arrest in September 2013 because she married a non-Muslim. We understand that Embassy Khartoum was less than forthcoming with assistance. We urge you direct Embassy Khartoum to prioritize the plight of this young family and the requisite meetings, paperwork, and diplomatic entreaties in order for this process to move forward in a manner which reflects the urgency of the situation.

Mr. Secretary, we again ask that the State Department, in collaboration with the Department of Homeland Security, quickly review all possible means available to grant Mrs. Ibrahim sanctuary in the United States. Mrs. Ibrahim is appealing her sentence and, in the event she is released, her life in Sudan will be in extreme danger since she is considered an apostate and her case is increasingly high profile. We also urge the State Department to prioritize granting her children U.S. citizenship and ensure that Mr. Wani has custody of his children.

Thank you for the recent public statements from the State Department on Mrs. Ibrahim's behalf. We urge you to continue to publically call for her release, highlight this injustice, and work with other governments sympathetic to her plight and that of her young children.

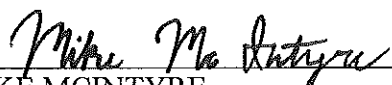
Sincerely,

  
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Member of Congress

  
CHARLES RANGEL  
Member of Congress

  
CHRIS SMITH  
Member of Congress

  
MIKE MCINTYRE  
Member of Congress

  
CAROL SHEA-PORTER  
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TOM COTTON  
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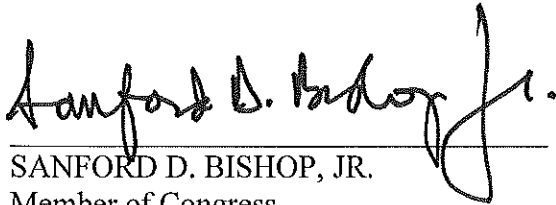
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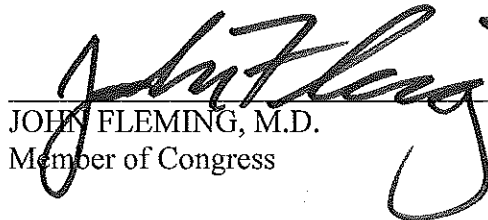
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Member of Congress



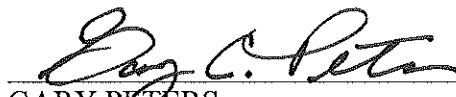
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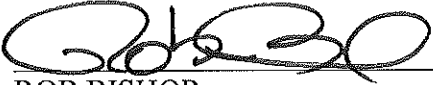
  
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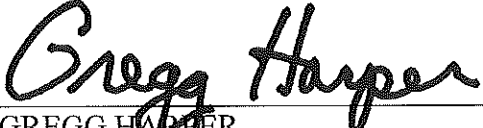
  
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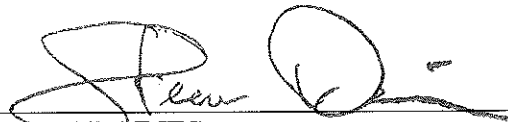
  
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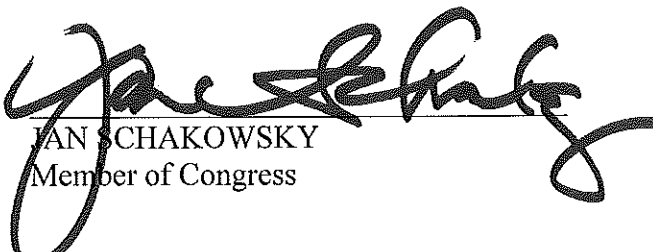
  
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