



22 February, 2016

H.E. Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
President of Sudan
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Via e-mail: info@presidency.gov.sd

Your Excellency,

The International Panel of Parliamentarians for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB) is committed to the promotion and protection of freedom of thought, conscience and religion or belief for all people. As such, we are writing to express our deep concern regarding the imprisonment of two Sudanese Christian men, Mr. Telahoon Nogosi Kassa Rata and Reverend Hassan Abduraheem Kodi Taour, by Sudanese authorities.

Mr. Rata and Rev. Taour were detained by Sudan's National Intelligence and Security Services (NISS) on December 13th and December 18th, respectively, and remain in custody. According to information IPPFoRB has received, these men have been detained on the grounds of merely exercising their right to manifest their religious beliefs. As you are aware, infringements upon these men's religious beliefs constitutes a violation of Sudan's international legal obligations under Article 18 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*, to which Sudan is a State party. Among additional clauses, Article 18 states that, "everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion," including the right to "have or adopt a religion or belief of choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching." We also note that the detainment of these men violates Article 38 of *The Interim National Constitution of the Republic of Sudan* (2005), which states that "every person shall have the right to the freedom of religious creed and worship, and to declare his/her religion or creed and manifest the same, by way of worship, education, and practice."

The cases of Mr. Rata and Rev. Taour closely mirror the past arrest of other Sudanese Christians, including Reverend Kwa Shamal and Reverend Hassan Abduraheem in 2014, whose cases reached global levels of attention and placed Sudan in the spotlight for failing to protect the rights of members of Sudan's different religious communities. As with last year's arrest of Pastors Yat Michael and Peter Yen Reith, Sudanese authorities have attempted to distance

themselves from accusations of religious intolerance by placing unsubstantiated espionage charges against Mr. Rata and Rev. Taour. IPPFoRB denounces charges of this kind, which fail to meet international fair trial standards and strongly urges, especially in light of Sudan's upcoming Universal Periodic Review on 4 May 2016, that all current and future actions taken by State authorities and those acting on behalf of the State, fall in line with international human rights standards.

In line with Sudan's international legal obligations, IPPFoRB respectfully requests your personal efforts to secure the release of Mr. Rata and Rev. Taour, and to ensure that all Christians and other religious minorities in Sudan enjoy the rights enshrined in international conventions and Sudan's Constitution.

Yours sincerely,

David Anderson, M.P.
Canadian House of Commons
Member, IPPFoRB Steering Committee

Baroness Elizabeth Berridge of the Vale of Catmose
British House of Lords
Member, IPPFoRB Steering Committee

Leonardo Quintão, M.P.
Brazilian Chamber of Deputies
Member, IPPFoRB Steering Committee

Abid Raja, M.P.
Norwegian Parliament
Member, IPPFoRB Steering Committee

cc. Awad Al Hassan Alnour
Minister of Justice

Ismat Abdul Rahman Zain Al-Abdin
Minister of Interior