

Sudan: Pastor Released

The Rev. Kuwa Shamal, one of four men detained in Sudan since December 2015, has been released.

During a Jan. 2 hearing, the judge ruled there was not enough evidence against the pastor. Kuwa, along with three other men, had been charged with “crimes against national security” in Khartoum, Sudan.

The trial for the Rev. Hassan Abduraheem, Czech aid worker Petr Jasek and Abdulmonem Abdumawla, a student, will continue Jan. 9 when defense lawyers are scheduled to present their case. The three men face several criminal charges, including “waging war against the state” and “spying.” If found guilty, these men could face the death penalty or life in prison.

Mr. Jasek, a former hospital administrator with 20 years of experience in health care, has previously assisted VOM in providing care to persecuted Christians in Sudan and Nigeria, including medical care for Christians attacked by Boko Haram.

In the first letter Mr. Jasek sent to his family after his arrest in December 2015, he stated that “God holds the key to my cell. He will open the door in His timing.”

After months of delays, multiple hearings have taken place in recent weeks. During a December 14 hearing, Ali Omer, a Darfurian man who suffered burns during a demonstration, gave his testimony and was cross-examined. The detainees were attempting to help this man and were subsequently accused of promoting his case to defame the government. Defense lawyers reportedly believe the testimony has given the defense a significant boost in its case.

The Voice of the Martyrs invites you to stand with the Rev. Abduraheem and Mr. Jasek in two ways:

1. **ADD YOUR PRAYER ON www.iCommitToPray.com**. We will provide the families of our Christian brothers with a link to these prayers so they can see that believers from all over the world are praying for them and for their imprisoned husbands and fathers.
2. **WRITE A LETTER** to each of these brothers at www.PrisonerAlert.com. The website provides information on composing your letters and mailing them to each prisoner, in care of the Sudan Embassy in Washington, D.C. Your letters will show the Sudanese government that Christians around the world are watching the trial and praying for these imprisoned Christians.
3. You can provide direct support for families affected by persecution by donating to VOM's **Families of Martyrs** Fund. Often when pastors or evangelists are imprisoned or killed for their activities, their families are left with little means of financial support. The Voice of the Martyrs established the Families of Martyrs Fund to help sustain these believers until they can find alternative means of support. The fund is also used to provide immediate support to those who have suffered persecution themselves. Support may include living expenses, relocation or vocational training.

Sources: VOM Sources, World Watch Monitor