

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 22, 2014

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

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We write to express our deep concern about the recent death sentence issued in Sudan for a pregnant 27-year old mother who is the wife of one of our New Hampshire constituents. Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag is a Sudanese woman married to Daniel Wani, a man originally from Sudan with U.S. citizenship living in New Hampshire. Meriam, a Christian, was arrested in Sudan for violating Shari'ah marriage laws, and when she refused to renounce her Christian faith, was sentenced to death.

Meriam is eight months pregnant and is being held in a women's prison in Sudan with her nearly two-year-old son. She has done nothing wrong. No man or woman anywhere should be sentenced to death by hanging for exercising the basic right of religious freedom.

As you work to address the many complex and global challenges facing the U.S. and the world, we must remember the critical importance of human rights and religious tolerance to international stability and our own national security. The U.S. must remain committed to the promotion of human rights in our foreign policy.

Meriam Yahia Ibrahim Ishag and her toddler must be released immediately, and we urge the State Department to use every means of leverage at its disposal to ensure the release of this young woman and her son.

We also urge the State Department to continue its efforts to ensure that human rights and religious freedom are key components of our bilateral relations with Sudan and U.S. foreign policy and diplomacy at-large.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress