

# Lawyers' Rights Watch Canada

*NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations*

**Promoting human rights by protecting those who defend them**

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May 14, 2013

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

Mohammed Bushara Dousa  
Ministry of Justice  
PO Box 302, Al Nil Avenue  
Khartoum, Sudan

Dear Your Excellencies:

Re: Detention of Asma Ahmed

Lawyers Rights Watch Canada (LRWC) is a committee of Canadian lawyers and law professors who campaign internationally for advocacy rights and advocates in danger and on rule of law issues.

I am a lawyer and a partner of a law firm in Canada, Cohen Highley LLP. I am writing, as a member of LRWC, in response to information obtained from Amnesty International. Asma Ahmed is a lawyer and a member of the banned opposition party Sudan People's Liberation Movement. She is a human rights defender and defended the high profile woman human rights defender, Jalila Khamis Koko, in 2012.

We are advised through Amnesty International that Asma Ahmed is being detained *incommunicado* by the National Security Service since May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2013 without access to her relatives or a lawyer and that she is at risk of torture and other ill-treatment; furthermore, she is at risk as she suffers from diabetes and requires a special diet and regular medication.

LRWC express their deepest concern about this case and the prevalence of torture and *incommunicado* detention which seems to be directly inhibiting human rights activities and the legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of expression as protected by Article 19 of the *International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights*. We therefore call on the authorities to guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Asma Ahmed, and release her immediately and unconditionally as her detention is arbitrary.

Lawyers Rights Watch Canada urges the authorities of Sudan to:

- i. Guarantee in all circumstances the physical and psychological integrity of Asma Ahmed, as well as of all human rights defenders in Sudan;
- ii. Charge Asma Ahmed with a recognizable criminal offence or release her without delay;
- iii. Ensure that Asma Ahmed is not tortured or ill-treated in any way, that she receives a proper diet and medication, that she be provided with access to a lawyer of her choosing and her family while being detained;
- iv. Conform with the provisions of the UN *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, in particular its Article 3, which states that “everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”; its Article 5 which provides that “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment”; and its Article 20 (1) which provides that “everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association”.
- v. Ensure in all circumstances respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in accordance with international human rights standards and international instruments ratified by Sudan.

We are hopeful you will investigate promptly the allegations outlined above and implement the relief requested. Your confirmation of receipt of this correspondence and actions to be taken would be appreciated.

Yours Very Truly,



signature electronically affixed

Joe Hoffer  
Sudan Monitor  
Human Rights Watch Canada

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