

Notice: Undefined index: et_header_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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SUDAN: Commissioners to investigate Khartoum church attack

CSW (09.04.2020) – <https://bit.ly/2Ka3MV4> – The Sudanese Minister of Religious Affairs and Endowments has appointed five commissioners to investigate a series of attacks on the Sudan Church of Christ (SCOC) Jabarona, which took place in December 2019 and January 2020.

On 18 March CSW called on the Sudanese government to investigate the attacks on the SCOC Jabarona and on churches in Blue Nile State which took place during the same period. On 20 March, the Minister for Religious Affairs and Endowments,

Mr Nasr al-Din Mufreh, pledged to investigate.

On 29 March Mr Mufreh signed a ministerial order appointing commissioners tasked with three primary duties: to draw up a list of properties owned by the church in the metropolis of Khartoum; to review all investment properties on land allocated to the church in Khartoum, Khartoum Bahri and Omdurman; and to investigate the attacks on the SCOC Jabarona.

The commissioners were given seven days to complete their investigation, and conducted their first interviews with the SCOC on 2 April. However, due to restrictions to contain the spread of COVID-19, the investigation is expected to take longer to complete.

The SCOC in Jabarona was attacked on 18 December, 14 January, 21 January and 29 January. During each incident, the assailants attempted to burn down parts of the place of worship. In addition to the attacks, church leaders received serious threats from Muslim extremists living in the area, who warned that they would not allow churches to be built there even if official permission was granted.

Demas Margan, a human rights lawyer and legal representative for the SCOC, told CSW: ***“The investigation is far broader than just the attacks on the church in Jabarona. Generally in Sudan cemeteries are allocated by the government, separate land is designated for Muslims and Christians. During the previous government, corrupt officials and investors bought the land that was set aside for Christian cemeteries and established businesses. This is an important area to investigate; however,***

it is disappointing that the investigation has a limited time to report and has not been extended to other parts of Sudan.”

The investigation is limited to the situation in Khartoum alone; however, concerns have been raised over increasing attacks on churches in Blue Nile state. On 9 March extremists razed the Sudanese Evangelical Presbyterian Church (SEPC) in Bout Town, El Tadamon locality, Blue Nile state, to the ground. The attack occurred in the same town where buildings belonging to the Sudan Internal Church, the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church were attacked on 28 December 2019 and again on 16 January 2020. Despite assurances from the Federal and State governments that the churches would be rebuilt and perpetrators would be brought to justice, the churches are still waiting for a resolution.

CSW’s Chief Executive Mervyn Thomas said: ***“CSW welcomes the appointment of commissioners to investigate the attack on the Sudanese Church of Christ in Jabarona and make an assessment of land issues that churches in Khartoum are experiencing. However, we remain concerned that attacks on religious minorities outside of Khartoum are not being addressed. The trend speaks to a wider concern of the government centralising its action in the capital city and side-lining the plight of historically marginalised communities. We urge the government to take swift action to address these imbalances and to comprehensively investigate violations occurring in Blue Nile state.”***

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