

Sudan: Release of Petr Jašek (2017)



Petr Jašek (© Jašek)

On 27 February 2017, Petr Jašek was released from prison in Sudan after being pardoned and freed by President Omar Bashir. Jašek, 52, was originally detained in December 2015. In January 2017, he was sentenced to 23 ½ years in prison for various charges including: waging war against the state, violating restrictions in military areas, spreading rumors to defame the state, and inciting strife between communities. He denied all the charges.

The events that led to his imprisonment began in November 2015 when Jašek, Reverend Hassan Abduraheem and Reverend Kuwa Shamal attended a conference for Christian leaders. Reverend Abduraheem showed a picture of a young man from Darfur who had been badly injured during a demonstration. Jašek later met with the injured man in Khartoum and donated money for the man's medical treatment. As Jašek left Sudan, he was searched by the National Intelligence and Security Service (NISS), who discovered a receipt for the donation to the injured man.

In the past, Jašek, who has extensive experience and training in hospital administration, assisted an NGO in delivering aid to displaced and suffering Christians in Sudan and Nigeria. While his work was humanitarian in nature, the Sudanese authorities sought to characterise him as a “filmmaker” conspiring against the Sudanese state. They claimed that his donation toward medical care for the injured young man was actually support for South Sudanese rebels.

HRWF largely publicized Jašek's case and conducted a campaign for his release. After he was freed, HRWF invited him to a conference at the European Parliament to testify about his experience in the Sudanese prisons.