



SUDAN

In May 2019 an announcement was made by the Transitional Military Council that Shari'a law would continue in Sudan. This provoked fear among Christians, who were hoping for an end to the violent persecution perpetrated by the now-deposed Omar al-Bashir. Shari'a law was enshrined in Sudan's 2011 constitution. This followed South Sudan's independence, with Christians facing poverty, war and genocide. The heaviest oppression has been in the Nuba Mountains, where Christians have endured ethnic cleansing as Arab-Sudanese try to eradicate black Sudanese with indiscriminate military attacks on Christian villages, churches, hospitals and schools. Moreover, since 2014, the conflict in South Sudan has pushed hundreds of thousands of refugees into Sudan. In October 2017, Catholic charity Aid to the Church in Need reported that Christian children in Sudan's refugee camps were being forced to say Islamic prayers to receive food rations. A source, who asked not to be named, said: "Children are conditioned to say Islamic prayers before [being] given food. This is not right."¹

FEBRUARY 2018

On Sunday 11th, Sudanese authorities "demolished" the Presbyterian Evangelical Church in Al Haj Yousif, Khartoum North.² Police evacuated the site, and books, chairs and other materials found inside were confiscated. Church leaders said a Muslim "who claims ownership of the Church property has forged documents showing ownership." A court case is ongoing, contesting the scheduled demolition. Church authorities claimed the Church had owned the property since 1989 and that a judge confirmed its ownership only the year before.³

OCTOBER 2018

Sudanese security raided a Christian house church in Nyala city, South Darfur and "subjected the converts from Islam in the group to a day and night of beating and torture."⁴ The African Center for Justice and Peace Studies said the accused were later released after recanting their faith. The pastor was released on bail the following day, charged with apostasy after refusing to renounce Christianity. Those found guilty of apostasy are liable for the death penalty.⁵

MARCH 2019

More than 70 churches have been attacked, with 32 of them burnt down, in Sudan's Nuba Mountains over the last 12 months, according to the Humanitarian Aid Relief Trust (HART).⁶ HART claimed the churches were attacked by Sudanese government forces as part of its struggle against the Sudan People's Liberation Movement – North (SPLM–N). General Jagot Mukwar, SPLM–N deputy chair, said: "The government is killing its own people."

1. Murcadha O Flaherty and John Newton, "Christian refugee children must recite Islamic prayers before receiving food," *Aid to the Church in Need (UK) News*, September 6, 2017, <https://acnuk.org/news/sudan-christian-refugee-children-must-recite-islamic-prayers-before-receiving-food/> (accessed June 25, 2019).
2. "Sudanese authorities demolish Evangelical church in Khartoum suburb," *Sudan Tribune*, February 14, 2018 <http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article64728> (accessed June 19, 2019).
3. "Sudan's Christian Schools allowed to follow Christian Week," *International Christian Concern*, April 29, 2019 <https://www.persecution.org/2019/04/29/sudans-christian-schools-allowed-follow-christian-week/> (accessed June 21, 2019).
4. "Sudan arrests, tortures Christians in Darfur over apostasy charges," *Sudan Tribune*, October 31, 2018 <http://sudantribune.com/spip.php?article66526>; (accessed June 21, 2019).
5. *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom Annual Report 2019*, p. 98, <https://www.uscirf.gov/sites/default/files/2019USCIRFAnnualReport.pdf> (accessed June 19, 2019).
6. "Report claims over 70 churches in Nuba region destroyed or burned over last year," *International Christian Concern*, March 15, 2019 <https://www.persecution.org/2019/03/15/report-claims-70-churches-nuba-region-destroyed-burned-past-year/> (accessed June 18, 2019).