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PRESS RELEASE

Paris, May 29, 2018

Sudan – Justice for Noura Hussein

UIA is gravely concerned about Noura Hussein Hammad Daoud, a young Sudanese woman who recently has been sentenced to death for “intentional murder”. Ms Hussein was convicted of killing the man she was allegedly forced to marry and who she says raped her.

On April 29, the Central Criminal Court of Omdurman in the twin city of Khartoum, found 19-year-old Noura Hussein guilty of the murder of her husband under Article 130 of Sudan’s 1991 Criminal Act. On May 10, she was sentenced to death after her husband’s family refused an option to pardon her and rejected financial compensation.

Ms Hussein has claimed that since she refused to consummate the marriage, her husband raped her with the assistance of his relatives. A day later, she allegedly stabbed the man to death in an act of self-defence when he attempted to rape her again. Her own family turned her over to the police.

Ms Hussein’s trial began in July 2017. It is UIA’s understanding that the Sudanese Court failed to consider as mitigating factors her forced marriage and rape. UIA is also particularly shocked by reports indicating that the international standards of due process and fair trial were not upheld in this case.

While Ms Hussein’s case has drawn international attention, and UIA remains concerned about her safety, UIA is also deeply concerned for Ms Hussein’s lawyers and supporters. On May 15, Mr. Adil Mohamed Al-Imam, Hussein’s lead attorney, was reportedly barred from holding a press conference by security forces. UIA respectfully reminds Sudan of its obligations to ensure lawyers the protection they need to fully exercise their duties, and the UIA respectfully requests that Mr. Adil Mohamed Al-Imam be allowed to fully and zealously represent the interests of his client, without interference, pressure or threat of harm.

UIA understands that on May 24, 2018, Hussein’s lawyers formally appealed Ms Hussein’s death sentence. In these circumstances, UIA joins the statement of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights in which he maintains that “(a) review that is limited to the formal or legal aspects of the conviction - without any consideration of the facts - is not sufficient under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights¹”, a convention that Sudan has ratified and, therefore, by which Sudan has agreed to abide.

Therefore, UIA respectfully urges Sudanese authorities to guarantee full respect of Ms Hussein’s rights to a fair trial and due process, consider fully and fairly her claim of self-defence, and ensure scrupulous respect of international standards, without recourse to the death penalty.

UIA believes that Noura Hussein’s case is an opportunity for Sudanese authorities to clearly stand against discrimination and violence against women and girls.

Finally, UIA reaffirms its unreserved opposition to the use of capital punishment under all circumstances.

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=23101&LangID=E>

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