

HIS EXCELLENCY MR MOHAMMED ABDALLA ALI ELTOM
Embassy of the Republic of the Sudan
3 Cleveland Row
St James's
London
SW1A 1DD

Your Excellency,

PLEASE PREVENT THE DEMOLITION OF MORE CHURCHES.

I am writing to echo the calls made for repeal of the plan to demolish and confiscate 27 churches, as addressed in the letter to the government on 16 May 2017 by the Sudan Church of Christ (SCOC). The letter came as a response to the demolition without notification of the SCOC building in the Soba region, and more recently the Presbyterian Evangelical Church in Hajj Yousef, in a suburb of Khartoum.

The order for demolition also affects Catholic, Coptic Orthodox, Sudan Presbyterian Evangelical Church and Pentecostal Churches.

The planned demolitions violate in practice the constitutional right of all citizens to access a place of worship, own land, and enjoy full freedom of religion or belief. In June 2016 the government announced the planned demolition of 25 churches, claiming they were all built on land allocated for other purposes.

In light of the fact that Sudan is a signatory to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and that the 2005 Interim National Constitution of Sudan provides for freedom of religion or belief throughout the entire country, demolition of churches violates all international norms and prevents Christians from exercising their right to worship in communion with others. Moreover, the confiscation of both the land ownership documents for 15 pieces of land and the travel documents of SCOC leadership represents a flagrant denial of the rights of the Christian community.

I therefore appeal to you to investigate fully and report on the implementation of the order for the demolition of churches, and to press the government of Sudan to review the current demolition orders and enable church registration, and to allocate land for places of worship – thereby complying with Sudan's domestic and international human rights obligations. We further request the return of land ownership and travel documents.

Please be assured of my continued prayers for yourself, your country and for all the authorities involved in this case.

Yours sincerely,