

18 September 2020

## **Sudan: Sentence handed down to human rights defenders Duaa Tariq and Hisham Hajooj**

On 17 September 2020, the Central Khartoum Primary Court sentenced woman human rights defender **Duaa Tariq** and human rights defender **Hisham Hajooj** to two months imprisonment and a fine of 5000 Sudanese pounds (approx. 75 EUR). The human rights defenders were convicted of “public annoyance” and “the disruption of public safety”.

Duaa Tariq is a woman human rights defender and artist. She is the co-founder and director of ‘Colour Sudan’ a group that works to promote civil and political rights in Sudan through art and theatre performances. Duaa Tariq peacefully participated in the Sudanese revolution in 2019. **Hisham Hajooj** is a human rights defender and a film director, his work primarily focuses on promoting civil rights in Sudan. He is also a member of Colour Sudan.

On 10 August 2020, while the human rights defenders were rehearsing for their upcoming play, a man belonging to a radical Islamic group in Sudan, complained that they were making too much noise. He also accused the human rights defenders and artists of practicing immoral activities. The man approached Duaa Tariq physically assaulted her by hitting her in the face. The human rights defenders tried to call the police, however the police reportedly ignored their request for assistance.

Shortly thereafter, several military personnel arrived at the studio. They threatened the human rights defenders and artists saying that they could take them away to any number of locations “depending on their mood”. Duaa Tariq and Hisham Hajooj were detained at a local police station along with the other artists. Duaa Tariq attempted to submit a complaint against the man who physically assaulted her however the military personnel would not accept it. During the detention Duaa Tariq received further verbal and physical abuse from the military officers. An officer from the intelligence services decided to open a case file against Duaa Tariq, Hisham Hajooj and their colleagues for chanting Sudanese revolutionary slogans during their detention. The human rights defenders and their colleagues were not allowed to contact their lawyers at any point during their detention. They were released after five hours.

On 17 September 2020, the Central Khartoum Primary Court Sentenced the human rights defenders and several of their colleagues to two months imprisonment and a fine of 5000 Sudanese pounds (approx 75 EUR). They were convicted of “public annoyance” and “the disruption of public safety”. Woman human rights defender Duaa Tariq was sent to the women’s prison in Khartoum which is known for its inhumane conditions. Hisham Hajooj was sent to Al Huda prison in Omdurman.

Front Line Defenders is deeply concerned about the ongoing harassment of human rights defenders Duaa Tariq and Hisham Hajooj as well as their colleagues. Front Line defenders believes that their sentence is solely related to their peaceful and legitimate human rights work.

### **Front Line Defenders urges the authorities in Sudan to:**

1. Immediately release the human rights defenders and their colleagues and quash their conviction as Front Line Defenders believes that they have been targeted solely as a result of their legitimate human rights work;

2. Ensure that the treatment of the human rights defenders and their colleagues, while in detention, adheres to the conditions set out in the '*Body of Principles for the Protection of All Persons under Any Form of Detention or Imprisonment*', adopted by UN General Assembly resolution 43/173 of 9 December 1988;
3. Carry out an immediate, thorough and impartial investigation into the physical and verbal abuse directed at woman human rights defender Duaa Tariq, with a view to publishing the results and bringing those responsible to justice in accordance with international standards;
4. Cease targeting all human rights defenders in Sudan, and guarantee in all circumstances that they are able to carry out their legitimate human rights activities without fear of reprisals and free of all restrictions including judicial harassment.

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