



**World Council of Churches**

**All Africa Conference Churches**

## **JOINT STATEMENT**

We express grave concern over the increasing incidents of attacks on Christians and destruction of church property in Sudan. We condemn the destruction on 21<sup>st</sup> April of the Sudan Evangelical Presbyterian Church Bible School and burning of its books including Bibles. It is worrying to note that the incident, which took place in Gerief West in Khartoum, happened while policemen stood by but did nothing. We have also learned with disbelief that on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> April security forces took over the premises of the Sudan Council of Churches (SCC) and Sudan Aid in Nyala, Darfur. We call for the immediate withdrawal of security officials from the SCC office and for the release of the vehicles and bikes that the security forces confiscated.

We regret to note that, despite the rhetoric about freedom of religion and protection of minorities by the government of Sudan, threats and discrimination against Christians in Khartoum and its environs are increasing with time. Mobs like the one that burned down the Bible School are marauding in parts of Khartoum and causing mayhem with impunity. They seem to have been encouraged by the inflammatory speeches of government leaders in Khartoum.

We salute the courage of Christians who gathered in the compound of the Presbyterian Evangelical Church on 22<sup>nd</sup> April to encourage one another; and we welcome the solidarity expressed by Muslims, women's groups, and some politicians who joined the gathering.

We call on the Government of the Republic of Sudan to move with speed and apprehend those responsible for attacking Christians and burning down church property, and bring them to book. Unless and until such actions are dealt with decisively and early enough, true security and the protection of Christians in Sudan will be greatly compromised.

We call on the international community to put pressure on the government of Sudan to respect the freedom of religion and protect Christians and all other religious minorities in Sudan.

We call on Christians around the world to pray for their fellow Christians in Sudan who are going through very difficult times and are not able to practice their faith in freedom.

Geneva 24 April 2012

Nairobi 24 April 2012

For: World Council of Churches

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