

HE Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir
Office of the President
People's Palace
PO Box 281
Khartoum, Sudan

Brussels, 22nd of May 2013

Re: Concerns regarding the detention of Ms Asma Ahmed, a human rights lawyer

Your Excellency,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Council of Bars and Law Societies of Europe (CCBE), which, through the national Bars and Law Societies of the Member States of the European Union and the European Economic Area, represents more than 1 million European lawyers. In addition to membership from EU bars, it also has observer representatives from a further eleven European countries' bars.

The CCBE, through its Human Rights Committee, places great emphasis on respect for human rights and the rule of law. The CCBE is particularly concerned by the situation of human rights defenders in the world.

The CCBE writes to express its serious concern over the situation of Ms Asma Ahmed, a 39-year-old human rights lawyer who has been arrested and detained incommunicado since the 4th of May 2013.

Ms Ahmed is a prominent lawyer and human rights activist engaged in the defence of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience. In 2012 she notably defended Jalila Khamis Koko, a high-profile women's' human rights defender.

According to information that we received, on the 4th of May 2013, Ms Ahmed went to the National Security Services' office in Khartoum North in order to comply with the request of Sudanese agents who had repeatedly visited her family's house in the preceding days, while she was away.

The CCBE has been informed that, since this time, Ms Ahmed has been detained incommunicado without any criminal charge filed against her by National Security Service authorities or any other competent judicial authorities.

Ms Ahmed suffers from diabetes and requires a special diet in addition to regular medication. The CCBE is alarmed after hearing reliable sources report that she could be at risk of torture or other ill-treatment.

In this context, the CCBE wishes to draw your attention to the following Articles of The United Nations Basic Principles on the Role of Lawyers (1990):

Article 16 states that:

Governments shall ensure that lawyers (a) are able to perform all of their professional functions without intimidation, hindrance, harassment or improper interference; (b) are able to travel and to consult with their clients freely both within their own country and abroad; and (c) shall not suffer, or be threatened with, prosecution or administrative,

economics or other sanctions for any action taken in accordance with recognized professional duties, standards and ethics.

Furthermore, Article 17 states that:

Where the security of lawyers is threatened as a result of discharging their functions, they shall be adequately safeguarded by the authorities.

In view of the above, the CCBE respectfully urges you take immediate and effective steps to ensure that Ms Ahmed is immediately released—unless national authorities officially file a precise criminal charge against her. The CCBE also implores you to take all necessary measures to guarantee that Ms Ahmed is not tortured or otherwise ill, and is able to have immediate access to a lawyer of her choice as well as to any medical attention that she may require.

Yours sincerely,

EVANGELOS TSOUROULIS

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Tsouroulis', written in a cursive style.

CCBE President