Sudan woman faces death by stoning for adultery in first case for a decade

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A woman in Sudan has been sentenced to death by stoning for adultery, the first known case in the country for [almost a decade](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/may/31/sudanese-woman-stoning-death-adultery).

Maryam Alsyed Tiyrab, 20, was arrested by police in Sudan’s White Nile state last month.

Tiyrab says she is appealing against the decision. The majority of stoning sentences, which are predominantly against women, are overturned in the high court.

Campaigners worry the sentence is a sign that the [military coup in October](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/oct/25/sudan-coup-fears-amid-claims-military-have-arrested-senior-government-officials) has emboldened lawmakers to roll back small gains for women’s rights made under the country’s transitional government.

The African Center for Justice and Peace Studies (ACJPS), based in Uganda, said the sentence violated domestic and international law and called for Tiyrab’s “immediate and unconditional release”.

The centre said the woman was not given a fair trial and was not told that the information she gave during interrogation would be used against her. Tiyrab was also denied legal representation, it said.

“The application of the death penalty by stoning for the crime of adultery is a grave violation of international law, including the right to life and the prohibition of torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment,” the centre said.

In 2020, Sudan’s transitional government, which followed the ousting of Omar al-Bashir, announced [reforms to some of its hardline criminal laws](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/12/sudan-bans-fgm-as-it-breaks-with-hardline-islamist-policies) and Sharia policies. The reforms did not include stoning, but in August the country ratified the UN convention against torture. The ACJPS said stoning was a form of state-sanctioned torture and was in breach of the country’s human rights obligations.

Jehanne Henry, a human rights lawyer, said the sentence “shows that harsh sharia laws [and] penalties are still being implemented in Sudan”.

“The death by stoning case is a reminder that the criminal law reforms during the transition [government] were not complete, and that such harsh, archaic punishments are still officially on the books.”

Flogging, which was outlawed in 2020, is still handed out as a punishment by the courts. The last known case of a woman sentenced to stoning for adultery was in South Kordofan state in 2013.The sentence was overturned.