

S. Sudanese rights group backs campaign against death penalty

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By Julius N. Uma

September 19, 2012 (JUBA) - A South Sudanese human rights body has thrown its weight behind the campaign against death penalty in the country, saying killing people as punishment is an “outrageous and inhumane” act toward the right to life.

In a statement to *Sudan Tribune*, South Sudan Human Rights Society for Advocacy (SSHURSA), also said it strongly supports the recent condemnation by the Comboni missionaries, of the death penalty practice in the young nation.

“It has been the position of SSHURSA that death penalty must be scrapped off in the books of South Sudan,” said Biel Boutros Biel, the Executive Director of SSHURSA.

“We are in full support of the position of and campaign call by the Comboni family and all other organizations and institutions against death penalty,” he added.

Last month, the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights strongly criticized South Sudan after two men in a central prison located in the country’s capital Juba.

The executions, according to the UN, largely contradict the global trend and position on the death penalty, as many countries strive to abolish the practice, which was endorsed by it Genera Assembly.

SSHURSA, however, called upon all religious and faith based institutions to collectively join hands with human rights groups in leading the campaign towards abolition of death penalty in South Sudan.

“There are other better ways such as life imprisonment as in the cases of murder other than killing a person,” Biel notes in the statement, while describing South Sudan’s judicial system as “so chaotic” and “unfair”.

A recent report, released by Human Rights Watch (HRW) deplored the poor state of prisoners in South Sudan, where prisoners allegedly live in terrible conditions, are unlawfully being detained while the whole justice system is reportedly a flawed process.

Currently, up to 150 states of the UN have reportedly abolished the death penalty or introduced a moratorium, either in law or practice.

According to Amnesty International, an overwhelming majority of countries did not use the death penalty in 2011, with only 21 out of 198 countries reportedly carrying out executions.

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