

# Arrest and detention of a woman human rights defender in Wau, South Sudan

Tuesday 15 January 2013

## Press statement - SIHA network

15th January 2013

On 6th January, Rabha Elis Bandas Bilal was arrested and detained by plain clothed security personnel at the Wau Criminal Investigation section. This followed a statement that she made live on Radio Mariah regarding the demonstrations on 9th December 2012. She was later released on 11th January 2013. Rabha is a woman human rights defender and Director of Women Development Group (WDG).

The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa is relieved to hear about her release but is however concerned about the continued repression and arrest of activists and women human rights defenders advocating for freedom of expression. We strongly condemn such acts. Human rights defenders should be accorded the space and environment needed to carry out their work. Our mandate as a women human rights organisation is to raise the profile, and support women human rights defenders in the region.

The December 8th and 9th protests which saw a number of civilians killed were over the cabinet's decision to move the headquarters of Wau County to Bagari. The protests are also said to have been peaceful.

*The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA) is a network of civil society organizations from across the Horn of Africa, with its headquarters in Kampala, Uganda. SIHA builds capacity within women's organizations, and advocates for gender equality for men and women. Key focus areas include eliminating violence against women, economic justice and challenging legal systems that violate the rights of women or create an environment of impunity for violence against women.*

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