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# ORTHODOX CHURCH GRANTED PERMISSION TO BUILD IN OFFICIALLY-ISLAMIC SUDAN



The Orthodox Church in Sudan gained a legal victory last month when it was granted permission to build a church on its own land.

The Church was earlier denied the right to build in Hay-Elrawda, Omdurman, by the Urban Planning Development. While mosques are easily built in Sudan, where Islam is the official state religion, the construction of churches is routinely denied and churches are demolished.

The Urban Planning Department denied the Church in June, arguing that the land it owns is zoned only for residential purposes, reports Christian Solidarity Worldwide.

The Department told the Church it had to re-register its land and seek the permission of all its neighbors, or else the project could not go ahead. However, according to CSW's local sources, mosques are almost always built on land with residential registration. Muslims are also permitted to use parts of their homes as mosques, while Christians are not afforded the same right.

However, the government then asked Ayman Khalid Nimir, the governor of the

Khartoum state, to review the case, and on July 16, he granted the Church permission to build.

“CSW welcomes the reversal of the legally questionable and discriminatory decision to deny the Orthodox Church the right to build on its own land; however, we remain concerned by the lack of a clear process for the registration and construction of churches,” commented CSW founder and President Mervyn Thomas.

Meanwhile, a building belonging to the Sudanese Church of Christ, in the same city of Omdurman, was demolished in May, following threats from local residents and authorities. The building was under reconstruction after being burned down last August.

An Orthodox church in Bout, Sudan, was set ablaze twice in as many weeks in December 2019-January 2020.

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