



Press Release & Statements

RE: Sudan & Petr Jasek

March 2, 2017

Bridges to Common Ground celebrates the pardon and release of Mr. Petr Jasek of the Czech Republic, previously sentenced to life in prison in Sudan.

Bridges was invited to participate in a Horn of Africa Peace Conference in Khartoum February 23rd. Three board members participated, including former Congressman and *Bridges* President Mark Siljander. The visit included many meetings and opportunities to pray with regional leaders and Sudanese officials. On over a dozen prior visits to Sudan, Siljander has established many close, long-term relationships with an array of prayer partners and co-workers for peace.

For 13 years, *Bridges* has pursued what they call a “5th Track”, supplementing the four, more traditional tracks of engagement: diplomatic, political, economic and military. The “5th Track” is a spiritually-based, person-to-person approach that helps bring conflicts and crises to a favorable conclusion. This approach includes applying an “algorithm of behavior” grounded in the ancient Semitic texts of the Abrahamic holy books which builds trust and relational equity in otherwise volatile situations. This same approach was applied in 2006 and was a primary factor for the deployment of the United Nations/African Union Hybrid Peacekeepers in the war ravaged Darfur, Sudan.

This round of engagement with Sudanese officials was undertaken with the encouragement of *Hardwired*, a U.S. NGO working for religious liberty, to help release Mr. Petr Jasek and other Christians imprisoned in Sudan. Former Sudan Foreign Minister Ali Karti was instrumental in facilitating Mr. Jasek’s release. *Bridges* Team members on the ground also included Doug Fike, Todd Hendricks & Bob Aramony.

Bridges commends Sudanese President, Omar al Bashir’s pardon of Mr. Jasek as an expression of the new era for relations between the United States and Sudan. While a citizen of the Czech Republic, Mr. Jasek’s release comes in direct response to efforts by members of congress such as Trent Franks (R. AZ) and U.S. based NGO’s such as *Hardwired* who worked tirelessly for his release.

Additional positive and encouraging actions were taken including the release of one of three imprisoned Sudanese pastors. During their six day on-the-ground engagement, the *Bridges* team received indications that the other two: Rev. Hassan Abdelrahim Tawor and Abdulmonem Abdumawla of Darfur, will also likely be released soon.

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