QUOTE

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO: 613(NW729E)**

**PUBLISHED IN INTERNAL QUESTION PAPER NO: 6-2016 OF 4 MARCH 2016**

**MRS C DUDLEY (ACDP) TO ASK THE MINISTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION:**

1. With regard to the imprisonment in Sudan of two Sudanese Christian men (names furnished), detained on the grounds of exercising their religious beliefs, (details furnished), what diplomatic action is her department taking since Sudanese authorities have allegedly **(a)** attempted to distance themselves from accusations of religious intolerance by placing unsubstantiated espionage charges against the specified persons and **(b)** failed to meet international fair trial standards;
2. will her department apply any diplomatic pressure on His Excellency Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir with regard to upholding international human rights standards; if not, why not; if so, what are the relevant detail

**REPLY:**

1. The Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO) has taken note of the arrest of the two individuals for their alleged religious believes. We further noted that one of them has since been released. Considering that, this is an internal matter in a sovereign state; our government therefore is constrained by international conventions on the conduct of diplomatic practice.
2. South Africa like all sovereign states will be cautious not to be seen interfering in internal matters.

UNQUOTE