

U.K. furor over Sudan teddy bear charges

by UPI

KHARTOUM, Sudan -- Politicians and Muslims in Britain have denounced Sudan for arresting a British school teacher for allowing students to name a teddy bear Mohammed. Gillian Gibbons, 54, made her first court appearance Thursday in Khartoum after being arrested on Sunday on charges of insulting religion, inciting hatred and showing contempt for religious beliefs. However, the judge adjourned the proceedings because prosecution lawyers from the Ministry of Education didn't show up, The Times of London reported. That was possibly an indication diplomatic and religious pressure from Britain was having an effect. Prime Minister Gordon Brown called the arrest disappointing, and the Muslim Council of Britain also lashed out at Sudanese officials, the BBC said. "This is a disgraceful decision and defies common sense. There was clearly no intention on the part of the teacher to deliberately insult the Islamic faith," said Secretary-General Dr. Muhammad Abdul Bari, in a statement. If convicted, Gibbons could face a six-month prison sentence, a fine or flogging.

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