

I'm not afraid of being flogged. It doesn't hurt. But it is insulting'

Tuesday 1 October 2013, by [AHMAD AL-HUSSEIN Lubna](#), [COPNALL James](#) (Date first published: 2 August 2009).

Lubna Hussein could receive 40 lashes if found guilty on Tuesday of being indecently dressed - by wearing trousers. In her first major interview, she tells James Copnall in Khartoum why she is determined to fight on, whatever danger she faces.

Sitting in the restaurant where her ordeal began, Lubna Hussein looks at the offending item of clothing that caused all the trouble and laughs softly. "In Sudan, women who wear trousers must be flogged!" she says, her eyes widening at the thought. The former journalist faces up to 40 lashes and an unlimited fine if she is convicted of breaching Article 152 of Sudanese criminal law, which prohibits dressing indecently in public.

What exactly constitutes "indecent" is not clear. Last month Lubna was among a crowd listening to an Egyptian singer in a restaurant in a swish area of Khartoum when policemen surged in. They ordered Lubna and other women to stand up to check what they were wearing, and arrested all those who had trousers on. Lubna, who was wearing loose green slacks and a floral headscarf, was taken to the police station.

"There were 13 of us, and the only thing we had in common was that we were wearing trousers," Lubna says. "Ten of the 13 women said they were guilty, and they got 10 lashes and a fine of 250 Sudanese pounds (about

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* The Observer, Sunday 2 August 2009:

<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/aug/02/sudan-women-dress-code>