

Prayer Diary: Eritrea

5-11 February 2023



‘The true enemy of peace is injustice. Respect for persons, their dignity and their rights, is the cornerstone of peace.’

These words were written in 2014 by Eritrea’s four Catholic bishops, in a letter describing the country’s ongoing plight which is causing thousands to flee every year.

Nine years later the situation remains just as dire. One of these bishops, Abune Fikremariam Hagos of the Catholic Eparchy of Segheneity, was arrested in October last year along with three other clergymen. The clergymen were eventually released in October 2022. However, 98 of the 150 Christians arrested during a September raid and 44 others detained following raids in January 2023 in Asmara remain imprisoned.

In his latest report to the UN Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on Eritrea described how ‘the dismal human rights situation continued to push thousands of Eritreans to flee the country.’

Find out more at csw.org.uk/eritrea

Sunday 5 February

Over 30,000 Eritreans are currently imprisoned without charge or trial in makeshift detention centres where torture is rife and access to food, drinkable water and medical treatment is minimal. Many are prisoners of conscience. Pray for the release of all captives (Psalm 107:16).

Monday 6 February

Eritrea has played a pivotal role in the conflict in the Tigray region of neighbouring Ethiopia, where its troops are accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. A peace agreement was signed in South Africa in November 2022, but Eritrea is not a party to this agreement. Pray for the complete withdrawal of all Eritrean forces, and for peace with justice in the region.

Tuesday 7 February

The regime has forcibly conscripted thousands of men, women and youth, including the underaged and elderly. The families of those who abscond are punished severely, including by being imprisoned or rendered homeless. Pray that this practice would end, and that all forcibly recruited individuals would be demobilised.

Wednesday 8 February

‘Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.’ (Isaiah 43:19 ESV) Ask God to do a new thing in Eritrea today.

Thursday 9 February

Today marks the first anniversary of the death of Abune Antonios, former patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church. He spent the last 16 years of his life under house arrest for resisting the interference of the Eritrean regime in the Church’s affairs. Thank God for his abiding legacy of integrity, perseverance and steadfast faith.

Friday 10 February

Last September, police in London violently dispersed Eritrean refugees and asylum seekers who were protesting in response to a pro-government rally outside the Eritrean embassy. Pray for European authorities to recognise genuine refugees and asylum seekers, and to take action against pro- government agents provocateurs responsible for hate speech and incitement.

Saturday 11 February

Father God, thank you that you see all that happens in Eritrea – every lonely prisoner, every grieving family, and every ruthless crime. Lord, rise up and defend those who are marginalised, unheard, powerless and isolated. Amen.