

Prayer Diary: Eritrea

26 November-2 December 2023



'My life is in your hand,' sings a group of young Eritrean Christians in a worship video on YouTube. It is a beautiful, uplifting song about praising God, who knows all our cares and concerns. These words are particularly powerful given that they are sung in the face of severe repression, which has been ongoing for more than 20 years.

Sadly, in April this year, 103 of these young Christians were arrested while trying to make another worship video to share online. Their case is emblematic of the past two decades in which countless Eritreans have been held arbitrarily and indefinitely in inhumane conditions, many of them because of their beliefs.

Find out more at csw.org.uk/Eritrea

Sunday 26 November

Give thanks that 51 of the 103 Christians were released in early September. However, as we go to print, the remaining 52 are still being held in Mai Serwa prison – a facility which is infamous for its extremely unsanitary conditions, overcrowding and inhumane treatment of prisoners. Pray urgently for their freedom.

Monday 27 November

Gospel singer Helen Berhane was held in Mai Serwa prison between 2004 and 2006. Praise God that Helen is free and is now a powerful voice for those who are still suffering in Eritrea. She is also helping victims of violations committed by Eritrean forces in Ethiopia's Tigray region. Pray that God would continue to bless Helen and surround her with his favour as with a shield (Psalm 5:12).

Tuesday 28 November

Among those unjustly detained in Eritrea are numerous prisoners of conscience. Some have been detained for decades because of their political or religious beliefs. May the light of hope shine in the darkness that surrounds them and banish despair. May God strengthen them and set them free.

Wednesday 29 November

Pray for protection, provision and deliverance for Eritrean refugees in Sudan and Ethiopia. Eritrean women and girls in Khartoum are particular targets for sexual and gender-based violence. In late April over 3,500 refugees were seized and forcibly returned from Sudan by Eritrean troops, and in June at least 400 Eritreans were rounded up in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and forcibly returned.

Thursday 30 November

'The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord is enthroned as King forever. The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace.' (Psalm 29:10-11) Pray this reassurance over those living under oppression.

Friday 1 December

Give thanks for an answered prayer: the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea has been renewed for another year. This role is vital for monitoring, documenting and reporting on the human rights violations in Eritrea, and keeping the situation on the UN's agenda in order to hold the government accountable.

Saturday 2 December

Father God, you hold Eritrea in your hand. Though years have turned into decades, you have not abandoned the prisoners of conscience. May they know that people all over the world are praying for their freedom, and for an end to the suffering of the Eritrean people. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.