

**H.E. Mr Estifanos Habtemariam Ghebreyesus Ambassador to the United Kingdom and
Ireland Embassy of the State of Eritrea
96 White Lion Street
London N1 9PF
ENGLAND**

18 May 2017

Your Excellency,

We gather once again, representing thousands of Christians in Britain and Ireland, to mark the fifteenth anniversary of the forced closure of all churches in Eritrea, apart from those belonging to the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran traditions, and the unjust indefinite detention of thousands of Eritreans of all faiths and none.

We stand in solidarity with fellow Christians and others in Eritrea facing crimes against humanity that cause around 5000 people to flee on a monthly basis. We call once again for the granting of full religious freedom to all of Eritrea's faith communities, and for the unconditional release of every prisoner of conscience.

We are dismayed at the ongoing imprisonment without charge or trial of tens of thousands of Eritrean citizens, including hundreds of Christians detained solely on account of their faith. We are deeply troubled at the continuing harassment of authorised churches, as illustrated by the illegal dismissal of Abune Antonios, the legitimate Orthodox patriarch, who is entering his tenth year in incommunicado house arrest. We are also disturbed at the continuing detention of eight Protestant leaders and four Orthodox priests, several of whom have been incarcerated unjustly for 13 years.

Credible reports continue to emerge of inhumane detention conditions, and of the severe physical and mental abuse endured by detainees, who are deprived of adequate food, potable water, and ready access to medication. We are aware that many have died following mistreatment and/or a denial or delay of medical attention, and remain concerned at the continuing practice of requiring Christian prisoners to sign documents renouncing their faith as a prerequisite to obtaining freedom.

Your Excellency, we urge you to convey to your government our appeal for swift and positive action to ensure the release of all prisoners of conscience, regardless of their creed, to restore the rule of law, particularly with regard to arbitrary arrest and detention, and to facilitate every right outlined in regional and international statutes to which the nation is a party for all of Eritrea's citizens, including the right to freedom of religion or belief.

Please be assured of our continued prayers for the prosperity of Eritrea. We remain committed to supporting the well-being of the people of Eritrea, and to being of assistance as the nation progresses towards a just and equitable future.

Yours respectfully,



Human Rights Concern Eritrea
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The British Orthodox Church
within the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate



RELEASE ERITREA



CHRISTIAN
SOLIDARITY
WORLDWIDE
VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS