

Today's Martyrs

Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom



Eritrea

Patriarch Abune Antonios (aged 80, disappeared in [2007](#), reportedly detained by the government in a darkened room, health declining, diabetic condition requires medical attention;

as of [March 5, 2013](#) is still reportedly under house arrest, 1500-2000 other Christians also being held in various locations;

as of [May 14, 2013](#) is still reportedly under house arrest, 2000 other Christians also being held in various locations under extremely harsh conditions;

still in captivity, 42 Christians arrested in [Adi Kihe](#) and [Asmara](#) in the week prior to [June 7, 2013](#) - the total Christians arrested for 2013 stands at 191;

as of [May 16, 2014](#) is still in house arrest in [Asmara](#), spends his time in prayer, is worried for the church and the faithful;

as of [May 23, 2014](#) has begun his seventh year in detention;

still in detention as of [January 28, 2015](#), the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom in [Washington DC, USA](#) has called for his release and that of 2,000 others held for their religious faith;

as of [June 26, 2015](#) is now into his eight year of illegal detention;

still under house arrest, his government appointed replacement Patriarch Dioskoros has passed away in [Asmara](#) on [December 21, 2015](#) after a long illness;

still under house arrest as of [April 13, 2016](#);

reported to have signed a document on [August 8, 2016](#) that apologized for his actions and expressed regret for the consequences, observers have expressed concern that coercion or even torture may have been used;

as of [May 27, 2017](#) has passed 10 years' in house arrest in [Asmara](#);

allowed to attend a [July 16, 2017](#) public Divine Liturgy at the [Asmara](#) cathedral, returned to house arrest;

still under house arrest as of [March 10, 2018](#);

'excommunicated' by a group of bishops who are loyal to the government on [July 18, 2019](#) [[the day after Christian former prisoner Helen Berhane met U.S. President Donald Trump](#)]

Aklilu Tesfay (arrested in [Asmara](#) shortly after his church announced on [April 20, 2014](#) that he would be ordained to the ministry, whereabouts unknown)

'Alice' (arrested [January 24, 2009](#) as she attempted to leave the country, held without charge,

released [February 2015](#), faces government surveillance and censorship, unable to work)

Aron Mehretu (arrested in [Asmara](#) shortly after his church announced on [April 20, 2014](#) that he would be ordained to the ministry, whereabouts unknown)

Aster Ghermay (telecom employee, detained in [Asmara](#) after a failed [January 2013](#) coup, suspected of being kept in a shipping container)

Azib Hadgu (mother of five, detained in [Asmara](#) after a failed [January 2013](#) coup, suspected of being kept in a shipping container)

Bemnet Tesfay (arrested in [Asmara](#) shortly after his church announced on [April 20, 2014](#) that he would be ordained to the ministry, whereabouts unknown)

Dr Berhane Asmelash (Director of Release Eritrea, reported on [May 19, 2014](#) to have stated "It is hard to comprehend why the Eritrean government is persecuting Christians. This is so barbaric and unacceptable to keep innocent citizens in dungeons for over ten years, and should be strongly condemned by all justice and peace loving people. Please pray for prisoners as well as for the underground church workers")

Daniel Mesfin (recent convert, university student, detained in [Asmara](#) after a failed [January 2013](#) coup, suspected of being kept in a shipping container)

Ermias Hadgu (arrested in [Asmara](#) shortly after his church announced on [April 20, 2014](#) that he would be ordained to the ministry, whereabouts unknown)

Bishop Feqremariam Hagos (in issued a report from [Segeneiti](#) on [May 25, 2014](#) declaring the oppressive conditions in the country as “truly shameful and unacceptable” and "desolate" with no one left to care for the elderly because so many are imprisoned, conscripted, or in exile in "peaceful countries, countries of justice, of work, where one expresses himself loudly, a country where one works and earns”, added that “There is no need for a land of milk and honey if you are already in one”)

Ferewini Hagos (telecom employee, detained in [Asmara](#) after a failed [January 2013](#) coup, suspected of being kept in a shipping container)

Fikadu Debesay (wife, mother of three, arrested in [Metkel Abiet](#) along with her husband in [May 2017](#);
died in a prison camp in the week prior to [August 10, 2017](#), body showed signs of torture, husband still detained, children cry and scream in their sleep)

Bishop Fikremariam Hagos (protested on [June 16, 2019](#) in [Segeneyti](#) the June 12, 2019 seizure of church-owned health care facilities by the government)

Fr Futsum Gebrenegus (psychiatrist, arrested in [November 2004](#);
 still in prison in [Asmara](#) as of [April 13, 2016](#))

Gabriella (arrested at an underground church service, jailed 'several years', beaten and tortured to force her to renounce Christ and to implicate other Christians, recently released before [October 31, 2013](#))

Fr Gebremedhin Gebregioris (theologian, arrested in [November 2004](#);
 still in prison in [Asmara](#) as of [April 13, 2016](#))

Haile Gebremiskel Wodi Keshi (father of three, detained in [Asmara](#) after a failed [January 2013](#) coup, suspected of being kept in a shipping container)

Fr Ghebretensae Teweldemedhin (arrested on [June 13, 2019](#) for refusing to bury a government loyal bishop in [Debre-Bizen Monastery](#))

Fr Ghebretensai Zemichael (arrested on [June 13, 2019](#) for refusing to bury a government loyal bishop in [Debre-Bizen Monastery](#))

Rev Haile Naizghe (arrested on [May 23, 2004](#);

wife and three children fled the country under threat of arrest in [2013](#);

imprisoned in [Asmara](#) as of [November 2014](#);

still in prison in [Asmara](#) as of [April 13, 2016](#))

Fr Haile Paulos (reported on [November 3, 2017](#) to have been arrested in [Asmara](#) after the government ordered all parochial schools closed)

Hajer Yohans (aged 85, grandmother, arrested on or before [February 9, 2013](#) for hosting a Bible study in her [Akriya, Asmara](#) home;

as of [July 29, 2013](#) is reportedly being held in a metal shipping container in the [Mai Serwa military camp](#), is suffering from pneumonia but is refusing to renounce Christianity in exchange for medical care)

Helen Berhane (Gospel singer, locked with 17 other Christian women in a shipping container filled with fleas and lice for 32 months, given one bathroom break a day in an open field, beaten for singing hymns, freed in [2006](#) after she became deathly ill, as of [July 5, 2013](#) is now residing in Denmark;

reported on [December 29, 2015](#) to have called on people to help the persecuted at a conference in [Rome, Italy](#): “You cannot do anything by yourself. We need many kinds of people. It doesn’t matter what kind of religion they have or which doctrine; we must be united and pray for the voiceless”)

John (alias, convert, older brother of Shibben, reported on [January 16, 2018](#) to have said: “I was so proud of him for not denying his faith through all of those years [of his imprisonment]. But I could not believe the terrible suffering he had been put through...Since his release we have slowly seen him change in front of our eyes. He has fallen into deep depression and there are times when he is completely irrational. We have to watch him all the time, even at night, to make sure that he does not harm himself. It is very upsetting...I dream of the day that Shiden will be healed and find hope again”)

Fr Kebreab Tekie (arrested on [June 13, 2019](#) for refusing to bury a government loyal bishop in [Debre-Bizen Monastery](#))

Pastor Kidane Weldou (husband, father of four, vehicle found abandoned in [2005](#), assumed to have been arrested;;

imprisoned in [Asmara](#) as of [November 2014](#);

believed to still be in prison as of [April 13, 2016](#))

Bishop Kidane Yeabio (in issued a report from [Keren](#) on [May 25, 2014](#) declaring the oppressive conditions in the country as “truly shameful and unacceptable” and “desolate” with no one left to care for the elderly because so many are imprisoned, conscripted, or in exile in “peaceful countries, countries of justice, of work, where one expresses himself loudly, a country where one works and earns”, added that “There is no need for a land of milk and

honey if you are already in one”)

Fr Kidanemariam Tekeste (arrested on [June 13, 2019](#) for refusing to bury a government loyal bishop in [Debre-Bizen Monastery](#))

Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel (pastor and mathematics professor, husband, father of four, arrested in [May 2004](#);

imprisoned in [Asmara](#) as of [November 2014](#);

believed to still be in prison as of [April 13, 2016](#))

Marigetta Yetbareke (theologian, aid to Abune Antonios, detained in [late September 2007](#))

Fr Markos Ghebrekidan (arrested on [June 13, 2019](#) for refusing to bury a government loyal bishop in [Debre-Bizen Monastery](#))

Bishop Mengsteab Tesfamariam (issued a report from [Asmara](#) on [May 25, 2014](#) declaring the oppressive conditions in the country as “truly shameful and unacceptable” and “desolate” with no one left to care for the elderly because so many are imprisoned, conscripted, or in exile in “peaceful countries, countries of justice, of work, where one expresses himself loudly, a country where one works and earns”, added that “There is no need for a land of milk and honey if you are already in one”)

Pastor Meron Gebreselasie (anesthesiologist, arrested [June 3, 2004](#);

still in prison in [Asmara](#) as of [April 13, 2016](#))

Fr Mussie Zerai (reported on [January 12, 2018](#) from [Rome, Italy](#) on the government's enforcement of laws banning private medical and social work “Beyond the economic damage to individual religious confessions those who pay a high price is the population who no longer has serious and efficient structures to turn to. In Xorona, for example, they closed the only dispensary in operation that was run by Catholics. In Dekemhare and Mendefera, the authorities have banned the activity of Catholic medical centers by stating that they were a duplication of state ones. In reality, public facilities do not work: they do not have medicines, they cannot operate because they do not have suitable equipment and often not even electricity”;

spoke after the government closed 29 Catholic hospitals and clinics in [Asmara](#) on [July 13, 2019](#) “The Catholic Church in Eritrea has always collaborated and cooperated with the institutions. With regards to healthcare, the quality of the service offered by our facilities was considered by the government itself as an excellence of the Country. Indeed, we do not understand on what basis the government has made this decision, our hospitals treated two hundred thousand people a year, about 6% of the entire Eritrean population...Already last year, another eight hospitals had been closed without apparently plausible reasons. This represents yet another violation of freedom of choice, as well as damage to the poorest population that cannot afford to pay medical expenses for treatment...The authorities recognize only four religions: Orthodox Christianity, the Roman Catholic Church, the evangelical-Lutheran Church and Sunni Islam. Any other activity carried out outside our places of worship is subject to strict control by the security forces. Furthermore, since 2001 the government has also prevented us from printing all our newspapers...In Asmara, about a month ago, more than 140 people belonging to the Pentecostal Christian Churches were arrested by the police while they were gathered in prayer...The restrictions and violations of fundamental rights and the limited opportunities for work and education push thousands of Eritreans every year to try to escape from the Country...Many prisoners have

disappeared. Their families do not know exactly where they are and, in many cases, they have no news. The United Nations estimates that at least 10,000 people are involved")

Pastor Ogbamichael Teklehaimanot (husband, father of three, detained for 'a few weeks' in [2003](#); arrested along with 68 other Christians including the wedding couple while officiating at their [January 9, 2005](#) wedding, abused in prison, released after four months; arrested in [October 2007](#), held in a police station in [Asmara](#); released in [2011](#), rearrested six months later; still in prison in [Barentu](#) as of [April 13, 2016](#); reported on [June 7, 2018](#) to have been released, in need of medical care)

Petros Araya (telecom employee, detained in [Asmara](#) after a failed [January 2013](#) coup, suspected of being kept in a shipping container)

Petros Yosief (arrested in [Asmara](#) shortly after his church announced on [April 20, 2014](#) that he would be ordained to the ministry, whereabouts unknown)

Ruth (wife, mother of three, husband in prison for his faith, reported on [September 15, 2017](#) to have said: "I always worry and wonder how he is. I also find it unbearable to see how my three young children miss him. They always cry for baba. They sometimes perform poorly in school because they miss him so much. It is so hard to care for them by myself")

Samson Tekle (recent convert, detained in [Asmara](#) after a failed [January 2013](#) coup, suspected of being kept in a shipping container)

Shiden (aged 35, alias, convert, brother of John, reported on [January 16, 2018](#) to have been arrested and imprisoned for 13 years, tortured, released, currently requires mental health services)

Tedro Negel (newlywed husband, arrested along with his wife and 47 others at a [May 21, 2017](#) Hamauti [a celebration one week after the wedding which includes prayer] [outside Asmara](#))

Fr Tekleab Menghisteb (physician, arrested in [November 2004](#); still in prison in [Asmara](#) as of [April 13, 2016](#))

Sr Tinsaw (reported on [November 3, 2017](#) to have been arrested in [Asmara](#) after the government ordered all parochial schools closed)

Bishop Tomas Osman (issued a report from [Barentu](#) on [May 25, 2014](#) declaring the oppressive conditions in the country as "truly shameful and unacceptable" and "desolate" with no one left to care for the elderly because so many are imprisoned, conscripted, or in exile in "peaceful countries, countries of justice, of work, where one expresses himself loudly, a country where one works and earns", added that "There is no need for a land of milk and honey if you are already in one")

Wehazit Berhane Debesai (aged "30's", **died in prison from pneumonia** sometime in 2013, denied medical treatment because she would not renounce her faith)

Yosief Kebedom Gelai (aged 41, convert, teacher, **died** on [July 5, 2013](#) in a secret incarceration center in [Medefera](#) after a long illness, arrested in December 2012 after his conversion came to the attention of members of the Eritrean People's Front for Democracy and Justice (EPRDF) at the school)

