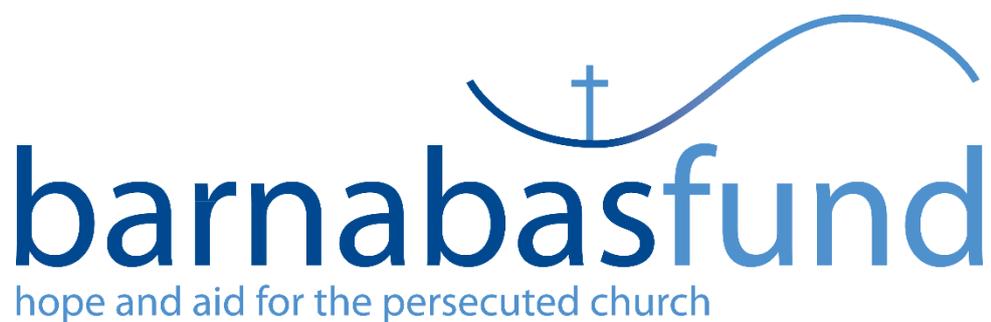


The deliberate persecution of Christians in Eritrea by the Eritrean government

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Summary

Eritrea is now one of the world's worst abusers of human rights. The government pursues a specific policy of religious persecution, which particularly targets members of religious groups outside the four groups recognised and controlled by the government. The majority of members of these unrecognised religious groups are Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians who are severely persecuted, including being subject to arbitrary imprisonment and torture. The US Commission on International Religious Freedom stated in its 2016 report that religious prisoners are routinely sent to the harshest prisons and receive the cruelest punishments. The report of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Eritrea presented to the UN general Assembly in October 2016 described this religious persecution as a crime against humanity and drew a specific parallel with the enslavement and persecution of religious and other minorities by the Nazis.

1. Introduction

Eritrea now has one of the worst human rights records in the world. In a May 2016 report the UN's special Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea observed that:

"Eritreans continue to be subjected to indefinite national service, arbitrary detention, torture, enforced disappearances, reprisals for the alleged conduct of family members, discrimination on religious and ethnic grounds, sexual and gender-based violence, and killings. In addition, many of those subjected to enforced disappearances in the past remain unaccounted for."¹

1.1 Specific targeting of Christians

The specific targeting of people because of their religion by the Eritrean government is sufficiently serious and widespread for it to feature prominently in the 2016 Annual Report of United States Commission on International Religious Freedom. The introduction to that report summarising the worst examples of religious persecution in the world stated:

"In Eritrea, where 1,200 to 3,000 people are imprisoned on religious grounds, there reportedly were new arrests this past year. Religious prisoners routinely are sent to the harshest prisons and receive the cruelest punishments. In 2006, the government deposed Eritrean Orthodox Patriarch Antonios, who protested government interference in his church's affairs. Besides being stripped of his church position, he has been held incommunicado since 2007 and reportedly denied medical care. Eritrea's dictatorship controls the internal affairs of the state-registered Orthodox Christian and Muslim communities and also bans public activities of non-registered groups. Religious freedom conditions are grave especially for Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses."²

While its more detailed discussion began by drawing attention both to the very grave nature of this persecution and the particular targeting of specific groups perceived to be Christian:

"The Eritrean government continues to repress religious freedom for unregistered, and in some cases registered, religious communities. Systematic, ongoing, and egregious religious freedom violations include torture or other ill-treatment of religious prisoners, arbitrary arrests and detentions without charges, a prolonged ban on public religious activities of unregistered religious groups, and interference in the internal affairs of registered religious groups. The situation is particularly grave for Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians and Jehovah's Witnesses."³

¹ United Nations Human Rights Council *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016)

² United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):1.

³ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):39.

2. Religious groups in Eritrea

There are no reliable census data on Eritrea, although there have been a number of attempts to derive population projections from census data collected during the time that Eritrea was a region of Ethiopia. For example, in 2011 Pew Research estimated that 57.7% of the population were Ethiopian Orthodox, 4.7% Catholic, 0.7% Protestant and 0.1% other Christian groups.⁴ These figures are cited here solely to illustrate the range of religious groups in Eritrea. Whilst all Christian groups suffer significantly at the hands of the government, Protestant groups such as Baptists, Methodists, Presbyterians and Pentecostals are singled out for particularly harsh treatment by the government.

3. The legal position of Christians in Eritrea

3.1 The 1997 Eritrean constitution

The 1997 constitution was intended to be the founding document of the new state of Eritrea after it achieved independence from Ethiopia. In practice however, the drafting of the constitution served to further the interests of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) which played a major role in the independence struggle and controlled Eritrea at the end of the war.⁵ It contains a significant number of seemingly mutually incompatible statements and the commitments to freedom of religion it does make need to be seen in that light. It also consolidates power in the hands of the president, including giving him the power to both appoint and dismiss Supreme Court justices.⁶

The 1997 constitution replaced the 1952 constitution which had existed when Eritrea was an autonomous region of Ethiopia. Although the 1997 constitution on paper adopts a number of commitments to human rights contained in the 1952 constitution,⁷ a significant number of previous commitments to freedom of religion were omitted. In particular, the 1997 constitution contains no equivalent of section 26 in the previous constitution, which stated:

"Freedom of conscience and religion

The right to freedom of conscience and religion shall include the right everyone, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."

Or, of article 28

"Recognition of religious bodies as persons before the law

Religious bodies of all kinds and religious orders shall be recognized as possessing juristic personality. Consequently, any religious denomination or any group of citizens belonging to such denomination shall be entitled:

- (a) To establish and maintain institutions for religious, educational and charitable purposes;
- (b) To conduct its own affairs in matters of religion;
- (c) To possess and acquire movable and immovable property
- (d) To administer its property and to enter into contracts."

⁴ Pew Research Trust 'Christian population as a percentage of total population by country' <http://www.pewforum.org/2011/12/19/table-christian-population-as-percentages-of-total-population-by-country/> accessed 15 March 2017.

⁵ Jennifer Widner 'Eritrea 1997' Princeton University Constitutions and conflict resolution project (Princeton University, 2004) <https://www.princeton.edu/~pcwcr/reports/eritrea1997.html> accessed 16 March 2017.

⁶ Eritrea 1997 Constitution articles 42 and 52.

⁷ Article 19 in the 1997 constitution is broadly comparable to article 22 in the 1952 Constitution.

However, even the theoretical commitments to freedom of religion which are contained in the constitution are in practice negated by two factors:

First, Article 23 section 2 states:

“All land and all natural resources below and above the surface of the territory of Eritrea belongs to the State. The interests citizens shall have in land shall be determined by law.”

This effectively nationalises all church property and institutions as well as that of private citizens.

Secondly, it is widely accepted that the 1997 constitution has never been implemented. The limited guarantees of freedom of religion that do exist are therefore a ‘dead letter’. The 2016 report of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom summarised the situation:

“There are very few legal protections for freedom of religion or belief in Eritrea. Those that do exist are either not implemented or are limited by other laws or in practice. The Eritrean constitution provides for freedom of thought, conscience, and belief; guarantees the right to practice and manifest any religion; and prohibits religious discrimination. Unfortunately, the constitution has not been implemented since its ratification in 1997.”⁸

4. Officially designated religions

This already limited exercise of freedom of religion was diminished still further in 2002 by the government stating that it only recognised four religions: Sunni Islam, the Coptic Orthodox Church of Eritrea, the Roman Catholic Church and the (Lutheran) Evangelical Church of Eritrea. All other Christian denominations such as Pentecostals were told they must apply annually for government registration to the Department for Religious Affairs.

4.1 Non recognised Christian groups

However, even though a number of denominations did apply, more than a decade later no registrations have ever been approved. In fact, the actual registration process appears to have been designed to facilitate the government collecting detailed information on Christian denominations in order to allow the government to more effectively monitor and harass them. The registration requirements include detailed information about its funding, leadership and activities which must be submitted annually.⁹ The effect of the 2002 government decree thus in effect i) made illegal the existence of other Christian denominations such as Pentecostals ii) legally required them to submit detailed information about themselves that would enable the government to more effectively monitor, control and harass them.

As the USCIRF observed in its 2016 report

“...To date, no other religious communities have been registered. The Baha’i community, the Presbyterian Church, the Methodist Church, and the Seventh-day Adventists submitted the required applications after the new registration requirements were enacted; the Eritrean government has yet to act on their applications. The government’s inaction means that unregistered religious communities lack a legal basis on which to practice their faiths, including holding services or other religious ceremonies. According to the COI-E report and Eritrean

⁸ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):40.

⁹ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):40.

refugees interviewed by USCIRF, most churches of non-registered religious communities are closed and government approval is required to build houses of worship. Leaders and members of unregistered communities that continue to practice their faith are punished with imprisonment and fines.”¹⁰

4.2 State control and harassment of officially recognised churches

The Eritrean government also tightly controls the activities of the four officially recognised churches who are required to submit reports on all of their activities to the government every six months and have had church leaders appointed by the government.¹¹

The report of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Eritrea summarises the situation faced by members of officially recognised churches:

“Members of authorised religious groups are not exempt from Government interference. While members of officially recognised religious denominations have been allowed to congregate and worship in public, many witnesses believe they are under surveillance. According to one witness who fled Eritrea in 2015:

‘In Eritrea, everybody practices in secret except for authorised religions. For these religions, the celebrations are organised in churches and are authorised, but the national security is checking what is said during the mass and other celebrations.’

For example, in 2014, the Government detained Lutheran priests for six months before their ordination.⁴¹⁹ The Commission has also heard evidence that the Government has been heavily involved in decision-making with respect to the leadership of Muslim and Orthodox religious denominations.⁴²⁰ While the targeting of members of authorised religious groups may not constitute the crime of persecution, it does further illustrate the degree to which the government fears all forms of independent religious expression.”¹²

The current situation of the Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church illustrates the level of state control, manipulation and harassment of even the officially recognised Christian denominations. The Patriarch his Holiness Abune Antonios had increasingly resisted government interference in church affairs, especially instructions emanating from Mr. Yeftehe Dimetros, the government’s official responsible for church matters. This included refusing to excommunicate 3,000 members of Medhane Alem, a renewal movement within the Orthodox Church. He had also demanded the release of three prominent Orthodox priests who had been held incommunicado since 2004. On 13 January 2006 he was formally removed from office. On 27 May 2007 he was replaced with a government appointee unrecognised by the Eritrean Orthodox Church. The same day Patriarch Antonios was placed under house by the government where he has been held incommunicado ever since.¹³ The patriarch is an insulin dependent diabetic whose health is reportedly declining.¹⁴

The patriarch’s case gained an increasingly high profile in international discussion of Eritrea’s human rights crisis, including in the report of UN Human Rights Council Special Commission of Inquiry into Eritrea which was published in May and June 2016. On 8 August 2016 the government website of the Eritrean Orthodox Church claimed that Patriarch had issued an apology for any intentional or unintended wrongs he had committed that led to his removal. However, this has been widely viewed

¹⁰ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):40.

¹¹ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):41.

¹² United Nations Human Rights Council *Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 section 290-91.

¹³ The Eritrean Orthodox diocese of North America ‘The current situation of Patriarch Antonios of Eritrea’ 22 December 2016 http://www.tewahdo.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1721:press-release&catid=36:statements&Itemid=83 accessed 16 March 2017.

¹⁴ CSW ‘Eritera’ http://www.csw.org.uk/our_work_profile_eritrea.htm accessed 15 March 2017.

as a fraudulent claim by the government, not least due to the absence of any written or oral statement from the patriarch himself.¹⁵

The 2016 report of UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea (Coi-E) observed that the government showed no signs of relenting in its harassment of even the officially recognised churches:

“Government control of authorised religious groups also persists. The Government of Eritrea continues to detain under house arrest Orthodox Patriarch Abune Antonio, who was arrested over ten years ago for calling for the release of political prisoners and failing to excommunicate church members opposed to the Government.133 The Commission was also able to corroborate reports that over ten Orthodox priests were detained in April 2016 for protesting his continued detention and expressing concern about Government plans to appoint a new Patriarch following the death of Abune Dioskoros who was appointed by the Government following the detention of Patriarch Abune Antonio.”¹⁶

5. Increasing harassment and persecution of Christians

1993 Eritrea gains independence from Ethiopia after a referendum.

1994 The Eritrean government closed Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran and Orthodox owned newspapers.

1994 Presidential directive denying Jehovah’s Witnesses all access to government services including schools and hospitals and documents including identity cards which are necessary for registration of births, deaths and marriages, purchasing property and internal travel permits and passports. This was due to their non-participation in the independence referendum.

1995 The Minister of Internal Affairs stated that Jehovah’s Witnesses had “lost their right to citizenship”.

1995 Proclamation No. 73/1995 “To legally Standardize and articulate religious institutions and Activities” this legally recognised only Sunni Muslims, the Orthodox Church, Catholic church and the Lutheran Church, required all others to apply for annual government registration and submit detailed statements of their assets including bank accounts and personal details of their leaders. The decree also prohibited religious groups from initiating or offering social services, development programmes and charitable assistance. In effect it banned non recognised religious groups, the majority of whom were Evangelical or Pentecostal Christians.

1999 Christians from certain Protestant denominations were forbidden to practise their faith in the armed forces. As military service was compulsory and of indefinite duration this amounted to a total prohibition on many Protestant Christians practising their faith.

2000 Mobs ransacked Protestant Churches in the capital city, Asmara burning Christian literature and destroying equipment in full view of police who told onlookers that the violence had been approved by the government.

2001 Free press closed down and journalists arrested. NB this general crackdown on independent newspapers was seven years after it had similarly closed Christian owned newspapers in 1994.

¹⁵ The Eritrean Orthodox diocese of North America ‘The current situation of Patriarch Antonios of Eritrea’ 22 December 2016 http://www.tewahdo.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=1721:press-release&catid=36:statements&Itemid=83 accessed 16 March 2017.

¹⁶ United Nations Human Rights Council *Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 section 117.

2002 Strict enforcement of proclamation 73/1995 began in May. All places of worship not belonging to one of the four officially recognised religions (Sunni Islam, Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, Lutheran Church) were closed down.

2004 United States Commission on International Religious Freedom recommended and the US State Department designated Eritrea a 'country of particular concern'.

2006 The government deposed the Patriarch of the Eritrean Orthodox Church for his lack of compliance with instructions from the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

2007 The government placed the patriarch under incommunicado house arrest and replaced him as Patriarch with its own appointee who was not recognised by the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

2012 UN Human Rights Council adopts first resolution on Eritrea approving the mandate of a Special Rapporteur.

2013 UN Human Rights Council renews and strengthens the Special Rapporteur's mandate.

2014 UN Human Rights Council establishes Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea.

2015 UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea publishes first report detailing specific abuses of human rights on grounds of religion targeting Christians.

2016 UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea publishes second report detailing specific abuses of human rights on grounds of religion targeting Christians.

2016 US State departments estimates that there are between 1,200 and 3,000 imprisoned on religious ground, the majority of whom are Pentecostal and Evangelical Christians and religious prisoners are routinely sent to the harshest prisons and receive the cruelest punishments.¹⁷

6. Current persecution of Christians

6.1 The USCIRF summarises the current persecution of Christians in Eritrea:

"Religious Prisoners

While the country's closed nature makes exact numbers difficult to determine, the State Department reports 1,200 to 3,000 persons are imprisoned on religious grounds in Eritrea. During the reporting period, there were a few reported incidents of new arrests. Reports of torture and other abuses of religious prisoners continue. Religious prisoners are sent routinely to the harshest prisons and receive some of the cruelest punishments. Released religious prisoners have reported that they were confined in crowded conditions, such as in 20-foot metal shipping containers or underground barracks, and subjected to extreme temperature fluctuations. In addition, there have been reports of deaths of religious prisoners due to harsh treatment or denial of medical care. Persons detained for religious activities, in both short-term and long-term detentions, are not formally charged, permitted access to legal counsel, accorded due process, or allowed family visits. Prisoners are not permitted to pray aloud, sing, or preach, and religious books are banned. Evangelicals, Pentecostals, and Jehovah's Witnesses released from

¹⁷ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department, 2016):39-43; CSW 'Eritrea' http://www.csw.org.uk/our_work_profile_eritrea.htm accessed 15 March 2017; United Nations Human Rights Council *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016); ; United Nations Human Rights Council *Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, June 2016).

prison report being pressured to recant their faith, forced to sign a statement that they would no longer gather to worship, and warned not to re-engage in religious activities.

Pentecostals and Evangelicals

Pentecostals and Evangelicals comprise the majority of religious prisoners. The Eritrean government is suspicious of newer religious communities, in particular Protestant Evangelical and Pentecostal communities. It has characterized these groups as being part of a foreign campaign to infiltrate the country, engaging in aggressive evangelism alien to Eritrea's cultural traditions, and causing social divisions. During 2015, security forces continued to arrest followers of these faiths for participating in clandestine prayer meetings and religious ceremonies, although toleration of these groups varied by location. The State Department reported that some local authorities denied water and gas to Pentecostals. The Eritrean government and Eritrean religious leaders do not publicize arrests and releases and government secrecy and intimidation makes documenting the exact numbers of such cases difficult. USCIRF received confirmation of almost 200 arrests in 2015."¹⁸

6.2 Prohibition on all exercise of religion during compulsory national service

In 1999 Christians from churches without official recognition were prohibited from any exercise or manifestation of their faith during national service. The UN Commission of Inquiry found that:

"Upon arrival at training centres, new conscripts are required to indicate their faith, have religious material confiscated and are informed that it is prohibited to practice their religion. Those who are caught praying or reading religious material are punished."¹⁹

This had a particularly severe impact due to the draconian nature of national service in Eritrea which is of an indefinite number of years. The UN's Special Commission of Inquiry likened it to the enslavement of religious and ethnic minorities by the Nazis

"Like the victims of the crime of enslavement in Germany during the Second World War, in Cambodia during the Khmer Rouge regime, and in the former Yugoslavia and Sierra Leone in the 1990s, the victims of the military/national service schemes in Eritrea are not bought and sold on an open market. Rather, the powers attaching to the right of ownership in Eritrea are revealed by (a) the uncertain legal basis for the national service programmes; (b) the arbitrary and open-ended duration of conscription, routinely for years beyond the 18 months provided for by the decree of 1995; (c) the involuntary nature of service beyond the 18 months provided for by law; (d) the use of forced labour, including domestic servitude, to benefit private, PFDJ-controlled and State-owned interests; (e) the limitations on freedom of movement; (f) the inhumane conditions, and the use of torture and sexual violence; (g) extreme coercive measures to deter escape; (h) punishment for alleged attempts to desert military service, without an administrative or judicial proceeding; (i) the limitations on all forms of religious observance; and (j) the catastrophic impact of lengthy conscription and conditions on freedom of religion, choice, association and family life."²⁰

6.3 Punishment of relatives and guilt by association

Relatives of members of unregistered churches who are arrested or flee the country are commonly arrested and punished. A 2015 UN Human Rights report on Eritrea and a follow up report in 2016 observed that there is a:

"widespread and systematic practice of punishing Eritreans on the basis of "guilt by association", in particular relatives and associates of government critics (both within Eritrea and outside the country), persons who evaded or deserted military/national service, Eritreans who left the country, persons who escaped from prison and

¹⁸ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):40-41.

¹⁹ United Nations Human Rights Council *Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 section 220.

²⁰ United Nations Human Rights Council *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 section 65.

members of non-authorized religious denominations. Although reprisals against third parties in Eritrea may take various forms, of greatest concern to the commission are those involving arbitrary detention, enforced disappearance or murder.”²¹

6.4 Government strategy of religious persecution

The UN Commission’s report also concluded that religious persecution was a deliberate strategy of the Eritrean government and one which constituted crimes against humanity:

“The commission has concluded that the Government perceives freedom of religion as a threat and has thus controlled religious expression... Persecution has been an integral part of the Government’s efforts to maintain its authority in a manner contrary to international law. The commission therefore finds that Eritrean officials have committed the crime of persecution, a crime against humanity, in a widespread and systematic manner since May 1991.”²²

They also found that the 2002 law requiring compulsory registration of non recognised religions was actually a strategy to prohibit membership of a number of groups, most of which were Protestant Christians:

“Despite attempts to register by some groups, the Government has refused to authorise any other religious group. Thus, in effect, the 2002 decree banned the religious groups commonly known as “Pentes”. “Pentes” include Pentecostals, Born Again Christians, Seventh-Day Adventists, Jehovah’s Witnesses, other Protestants, Baha’is and Buddhists.

Following the 2002 ban, the Government stepped up its campaign of arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance of members and leaders of unauthorised religious groups that began well before the issuance of the decree.⁴¹⁵ The Commission found that “attacks were not random acts of religious persecution but were part of a diligently planned policy of the Government” which vilified un-authorized religious groups, regularly referring to their leaders and members as foreign state agents.”²³

7. Testimonies of persecution of Christians

The detailed findings of the UN Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea contained specific accounts of persecution of Christians:

“A number of witnesses told the Commission that members of non-authorized religious groups continue to suffer acute discrimination.¹³¹ A witness told the Commission:

‘I left Eritrea on 20 January 2016 because I was not able to practice my religion freely and I was detained many times for being a member of [a non-recognised religion]. I was detained the last time on 9 March 2014. We were 58 people, including women and children, worshipping together when the military police stormed the premises and arrested us all. They took us to [the local] police prison. They beat us very badly and many of us sustained injuries. When we arrived at this prison we met 50 other Protestants from [a banned church] detained for practicing their faith [...] On 29 March 2014, 11 of us refused to renounce our faith, so were transferred to an underground prison. On 27 April 2014, five persons agreed to renounce their faith and were released after signing documents saying that they were now members of the Eritrean Orthodox Church. On 5 May 2015, we were transferred to a military prison [...] In all, we were 108 religious prisoners in this prison. I was beaten once there because I refused to renounce my religion. On 12 November 2015, while working in the garden, I managed to escape. Persecution on religious ground has not improved and people are still being arrested for worshipping.

²¹ United Nations Human Rights Council *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, June 2015 section 74 and United Nations Human Rights Council *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 sections 83-84.

²² United Nations Human Rights Council *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 sections 87-88.

²³ United Nations Human Rights Council *Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 section 287-88.

I know that many of those arrested have died in their respective prisons due to torture and pneumonia, for which some have been forbidden proper medical treatment. Protestants detained are only released after denouncing their faith and promising to worship in the Eritrean Orthodox Church.”²⁴

8. International recognition of the plight of Eritrean Christians

8.1 US State Department

In 2016 the US Commission on International Religious Freedom listed Eritrea as a tier 1 country (its highest designation for religious persecution) and recommended that the US Secretary of State continue to designate Eritrea as a ‘Country of Particular Concern’ (CPC), a designation which Eritrea had been placed in since 2004 and which is applied to only eight other countries in the world including North Korea.²⁵ In consequences of this on 24 September 2014 the US government in accordance with the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act imposed a range of sanctions including continuation of an arms embargo on Eritrea.²⁶

8.2 United Nations

In 2014 the United Nations Human Rights Council launched a Special Commission of Inquiry on Eritrea that drew attention to its severe freedom of religion abuses. The Commission’s report which was published in June 2016 and presented to the UN General Assembly in October 2016 not only drew attention to the specific persecution of members of religious groups that lacked government recognition, the majority of whom were Evangelical and Pentecostal Christians but also designated this a crime against humanity and compared the situation in Eritrea to the persecution and enslavement of religious and other minorities by the Nazis.²⁷

²⁴ United Nations Human Rights Council *Detailed Findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 section 116.

²⁵ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):7,13.

²⁶ United States Council on International Religious Freedom Annual report 2016 (US State Department,2016):14.

²⁷ United Nations Human Rights Council *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Human rights in Eritrea* (New York:United Nations, May 2016 section 65.