



## AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC STATEMENT

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### Amnesty International Welcomes the Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea

*Statement delivered during the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea at the 37th Session of the Human Rights Council*

Amnesty International welcomes the report of the Special Rapporteur, and echoes her calls to the Eritrean government for increased cooperation, as well as her calls for accountability and justice for past and continuing crimes against humanity in the country.

Amnesty International remains concerned about the National Service program that continues to be the primary reason many Eritreans flee the country. We are also concerned about the increasing number of African and European states that are not accepting those fleeing as refugees. Most of those serving in the Eritrean national service program are not paid a living wage, they serve for indefinite amounts of time and there is no alternative civilian service for those who object to military service on religious, ethical or other conscientious grounds.

Amnesty International continues to receive reports of unwarranted government interference into religious affairs, specifically through the harassment of Pentecostals and Government control of private schools, including religious ones.

Amnesty International laments the lack of space for political dissent in Eritrea. The Eritrean government's continued failure to provide information of the fate or whereabouts of the politicians and journalists arrested in 2001, widely known as G-11 and G-15 respectively, remains deeply worrying. So are the mass arrests of supporters of Hajji Musa in the immediate aftermath of the 31 October protest and when some of his supporters were arrested for attending his funeral this month.

Amnesty International urges the Eritrean government to:

- Fully cooperate with the UN Special Rapporteur of Eritrea, including by granting her full and unfettered access to the country;
- Make efforts to respect the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion in Eritrea;
- Release information on the whereabouts of Haile Woldetensae, and the others arrested with him and held incommunicado since 2001, as well as those arrested for protesting in

support of Mohammed Nur after his arrest, and after his death.

## **Background**

Amnesty International delivered the above oral statement at the Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea in Geneva. For further information, see Amnesty International's [submission](#) to the United Nations Human Rights Committee at its 119<sup>th</sup> Session.