



Eritrea – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 11 January 2019

Information on Mietir Training Camp in the North Eastern part of Eritrea, i.e military recruits working at the camp, treatment of trainees at the camp, extra judicial killings, torture and any other information available, reports of an escape by 2 prisoners on or around 15/10/2014.

A report from the London-based charity Release Eritrea states:

“Me'eter is a remote military prison, where torture and extremely harsh treatment is rife. At least 12 prisoners of faith (2 women and 10 men) have died in custody since, may 2002, when the Eritrean government started to clamp down on believers not deemed to be from 'approved faith groups' , three of those who died: Mogos Solomon (30), Yemane Kahsai Andom (43) and Mehari Ghebrezghi Asgedom (43) died in Me'eter Prison.” (Release Eritrea (23 June 2011) *A new Spate of Arrests of Christians in Eritrea*)

An article from UK newspaper The Guardian states:

“Me'eter military jail was one of Eritrea's most notorious, certainly its most remote. Encircled by mountains, watchtowers and wide thorn bushes designed to rip a man to shreds, escape was considered impossible. Inmates died from the extreme heat. Others were tortured to death.” (The Guardian (6 September 2014) *One man's hellish journey from Eritrea terror to UK sanctuary*)

In an article published on the Christian website the Baker Deep End Blog the author John Allen quotes from his book “The Global War on Christians” as follows:

“The Me'eter military camp and prison, located in the Eritrean desert off the coast of the Red Sea, is a compelling place to begin the tale.

The prison's signature bit of cruelty is the use of crude metal shipping containers to hold inmates, with so many people forced into these 40-by-38-foot spaces, designed to transport commercial cargo, that prisoners typically have no room to lie down and barely enough to sit. The metal exacerbates the desert temperatures, which means bone-chilling cold at night and wilting heat during the day. When the sun is at its peak, temperatures inside the containers are believed to reach 115 degrees Fahrenheit or higher. One former inmate, lucky enough to be released after serving up a coerced confession, described the containers as 'giant ovens baking people alive' Because prisoners are given little water, they sometimes end up drinking their own scant sweat and urine to stay alive.

When not in lockdown, prisoners are forced into pointless exercises such as counting grains of sand in the desert at midday, and scores die of heatstroke

and dehydration. There are no toilets inside the containers, just crude buckets overflowing with urine and feces, placing inmates at risk of infection with diseases such as cholera and diphtheria. Prisoners have no contact with their families or friends, no legal representation, and no medical care. Forms of torture at Me'eter (also transliterated as 'Meiter' and 'Mitire') include making inmates kneel on a tree trunk and beating the soles of their feet with rubber hoses; hanging prisoners by their arms and exposing them to the sun, sometimes for forty-eight hours or more; and forcing prisoners to walk barefoot over stones and thorns, with beatings for not going fast enough. Survivors say sexual abuse is also common. Me'eter was opened in 2009 by Eritrea's single-party regime, controlled by the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, and is still going strong, despite the fact its horrors are well documented." (The Baker Deep End Blog (14 March 2014) *Is There a Modern-Day Concentration Camp for Christians? Yes, Read This and Pray*)

The 2013 Amnesty International for Eritrea, in a paragraph headed "Torture and other ill-treatment", states:

"In August, Yohannes Haile, a Jehovah's Witness detained since September 2008, reportedly died at Me'eter prison from the effects of extreme heat after being confined underground since October 2011. Three others detained with him were reportedly in critical condition. Their fate remained unknown." (Amnesty International (22 May 2013) *Annual Report 2013: Eritrea*)

The 2017 US Department of State country report for Eritrea, in a section titled "Prison and Detention Center Conditions", states:

"Data on the prevalence of death in prison and detention facilities were not available, although persons reportedly died from harsh conditions, including lack of medical care and use of excessive force. The government did not take action against persons responsible for detainee deaths.

Tsehaye Tesfamariam, a member of Jehovah's Witnesses, reportedly died in November 2016 after his release from Me'eter camp in 2015 due to illness and lack of adequate medical care during detention. He had been detained since 2009.

Authorities held some detainees incommunicado in metal shipping containers and underground cells without toilets or beds. Use of psychological torture was common, according to inmates held in prior years. Some former prisoners reported authorities conducted interrogations and beatings within hearing distance of other prisoners to intimidate them. The government did not provide adequate basic or emergency medical care in prisons or detention centers. Food, sanitation, ventilation, and lighting were inadequate, and potable water was sometimes available only for purchase." (US Department of State (20 April 2018) *2017 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Eritrea*, p.4)

Information on an escape from Me'eter camp on or around 15 October 2014 was not found among sources available to the Refugee Documentation Centre.

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research and Information Unit within time

constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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