



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
LEGAL AID BOARD

Ethiopia - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 17 December 2012

Information between June - December 2012 on people being charged with instigating a revolution and defamation of the Prime Minister; applicable charges for those found guilty

In November 2012 *Article 19* notes:

“ARTICLE 19 calls for the Ethiopian authorities to drop all charges against Yusuf Getachew, a journalist for the publication *Ye’Muslimoch Guday* (Muslim Affairs) who was charged on October 29 under the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation 2009. ARTICLE 19 urges the Ethiopian government to stop using the Anti-Terrorism Proclamation 2009 to suppress political criticism and calls for an urgent review to bring this legislation with international standards to protect freedom of expression. "It is worrying that journalists and critics of the Ethiopian government continue to be persecuted and intimidated using the anti-terrorism law, which carries the death penalty. All charges against Yusuf Getachew should be dropped immediately. We are witnessing an outrageous abuse of international standards on human rights that must not be ignored. The Ethiopian government needs to allow legitimate criticism and protests in the country," said Henry Maina, ARTICLE 19 Eastern Africa Director. Getachew has been charged with plotting acts of "terrorism, intending to advance a political, religious or ideological cause" by force; and the "planning, preparation, conspiracy, incitement and attempt of terrorist acts." “ (Article 19 (16 November 2012) *Ethiopia: Authorities must drop terrorism charges against journalist who reported on anti-government protests*).

A report issued in November 2012 by *Amnesty International* states:

“The Ethiopian authorities are committing human rights violations in response to the ongoing Muslim protest movement in the country” (Amnesty International (2 November 2012) *Ethiopia: Government continues to target peaceful Muslim protest movement*).

This document also notes that:

“Key figures within the movement have been charged with terrorism offences” (ibid).

In September 2012

“Two Swedish journalists are among prisoners who have been pardoned in Ethiopia to mark the country's New Year Day. Johan Persson and Martin Schibbye were jailed in December 2011 for 11 years following their conviction for "supporting a terrorist organisation and illegally entering Ethiopia" “ (International Federation of Journalists (11 September 2012) *IFJ and EFJ Welcome Release on Pardon of Journalists Held in Ethiopia*).

In August 2012 a *Human Rights Watch* report notes:

“The Ethiopian government should immediately release 17 prominent Muslim leaders arrested as part of a brutal crackdown on peaceful Muslim protesters in Addis Ababa, Human Rights Watch said today” (Human Rights Watch (15 August 2012) *Ethiopia: Prominent Muslims Detained in Crackdown*).

This document also points out that:

“It is unclear what the detainees will be charged with. According to unconfirmed reports, they are under investigation on unspecified charges under the country’s overly broad anti-terrorism law” (ibid).

A document released in August 2012 by *Amnesty International* states:

“The detention yesterday of the editor of one of Ethiopia’s last independent publications is a worrying signal that the government intends to carry on targeting dissent, Amnesty International said today. Temesgen Desalegn, editor of Fete newspaper, faces a number of criminal charges based on articles he has written or published criticizing the government and calling on Ethiopia’s youth to peacefully protest against government repression” (Amnesty International (24 August 2012) *Ethiopia: Detention of editor signals continuation of Meles-era crackdown*).

This report also notes:

“Four charges were filed against Temesgen and his publishing house, Mastewal Printing and Advertising, including ‘Provocation and Preparation’ to incite the youth to overthrow the constitutional order, ‘Inciting the public through false rumours’ and ‘Attacks against the state’ through defaming the government. The charges relate to various articles published in Fete between July 2011 and March 2012” (ibid).

A report published in July 2012 by *BBC News* states:

“A prominent Ethiopian journalist and blogger has been sentenced to 18 years in jail for violating the country’s anti-terrorism legislation. Eskinder Nega and 23 others were found guilty last month” (BBC News (13 July 2012) *Ethiopian blogger Eskinder Nega jailed for 18 years*).

No further information on this issue could be found among sources available to the RDC.

References

Amnesty International (2 November 2012) *Ethiopia: Government continues to target peaceful Muslim protest movement*

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/AFR25/016/2012/en/17ccd118-26bf-447a-a875-42df354ce753/afr250162012en.pdf>

Accessed Monday 17 December 2012

Amnesty International (24 August 2012) *Ethiopia: Detention of editor signals continuation of Meles-era crackdown*

<http://www.amnesty.org/en/news/ethiopia-detention-editor-signals-continuation-meles-era-crackdown-2012-08-23>

Accessed Monday 17 December 2012

Article 19 (16 November 2012) *Ethiopia: Authorities must drop terrorism charges against journalist who reported on anti-government protests*

<http://www.ein.org.uk/members/country-report/ethiopia-authorities-must-drop-terrorism-charges-against-journalist-who-repor>

This is a subscription database

Accessed Monday 17 December 2012

BBC News (13 July 2012) *Ethiopian blogger Eskinder Nega jailed for 18 years*

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-18825538>

Accessed Monday 17 December 2012

Human Rights Watch (15 August 2012) *Ethiopia: Prominent Muslims Detained in Crackdown*

<http://www.hrw.org/news/2012/08/15/ethiopia-prominent-muslims-detained-crackdown>

Accessed Monday 17 December 2012

international Federation of Journalists (11 September 2012) *IFJ and EFJ Welcome Release on Pardon of Journalists Held in Ethiopia*

<http://www.ifj.org/en/articles/ifj-and-efj-welcome-release-on-pardon-of-journalists-held-in-ethiopia>

Accessed Monday 17 December 2012

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre 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.

Sources Consulted

Amnesty International
BBC News
Electronic Immigration Network
European Country of Origin Information Network
Freedom House
Google
Human Rights Watch
Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada
Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
International Crisis Group
IRIN News
Lexis Nexis
Minority Rights Group International
Online Newspapers
Refugee Documentation Centre E-Library
Refugee Documentation Centre Query Database
Reliefweb
Reuters

United Kingdom Home Office
United States Department of State
UNHCR Refworld