

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	275
Land:	Eritrea
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Amnesty International Report 2016/2017 – Eritrea
Udgivet:	22. februar 2017
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	2. marts 2017



Amnesty International Report 2016/17 - Eritrea

Publisher [Amnesty International](#)

Publication Date 22 February 2017

Cite as Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2016/17 - Eritrea*, 22 February 2017, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/58b034003f.html> [accessed 2 March 2017]

This is not a UNHCR publication. UNHCR is not responsible for, nor does it necessarily endorse, its content. Any views expressed are solely those of the author or publisher and do not necessarily reflect those of UNHCR, the United Nations or its Member States.

State of Eritrea

Head of state and government: **Isaias Afwerki**

Thousands continued to leave the country, many fleeing the indefinite national service. The right of people to leave the country continued to be restricted. Restrictions on the right to freedom of expression and of religion remained. The security forces carried out unlawful killings. Arbitrary detention without charge or trial continued to be the norm for thousands of prisoners of conscience.

BACKGROUND

The change of currency affected the livelihood of families. Under government regulations, withdrawals from individuals' bank accounts were limited to 5000 nakfa (US\$290) a month.

Between 12 and 14 June, armed clashes erupted between the Eritrean and the Ethiopian military. Hundreds of combatants were reported to have been killed. Both governments blamed each other for provoking the conflict. Relations between the two countries have remained tense since Ethiopia requested negotiations in advance of the implementation of the Ethiopia/Eritrea Boundary Commission's decision.

FORCED LABOUR – NATIONAL SERVICE

The mandatory national service continued to be extended indefinitely despite the government's promise in 2014 to end the system of unlimited service. Significant numbers of national service conscripts remained in open-ended conscription, some for as long as 20 years. Although under the law the minimum conscription age was 18, in practice children continued to be subjected to military training under the requirement that they undergo grade 12 of secondary school at the Sawa National Service training camp. There they faced harsh living conditions, military-style discipline and weapons training. Of 14,000 people who graduated from the camp in July, 48% were women who experienced particularly harsh treatment, including sexual enslavement, torture and other sexual abuse.

Conscripts were paid low wages and had limited and arbitrarily granted leave allowances which, in many cases, disrupted family life. They served in the defence forces and were assigned to agriculture, construction, teaching, the civil service and other roles. There was no provision for conscientious objection.

Older people continued to be conscripted into the "People's Army", where they were given a weapon and assigned duties under threat of punitive repercussions. Men of up to 67 years of age were conscripted.

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

The right of people to leave the country was restricted. The authorities continued to prohibit those aged between five and 50 years from travelling abroad and anyone attempting to leave through borders was subject to arbitrary detention. People seeking to leave for family reunification abroad were forced to travel via land borders in order to take flights from other countries. If caught by the military en route, they were detained without charge until they paid exorbitant fines. The amount payable depended on factors such as the commanding officer making the arrest and the time of the year. People caught during national holidays to commemorate independence were subject to higher fines. The amount was greater for those attempting to cross the border with Ethiopia. A "shoot-to-kill" policy remained in place for anyone evading capture and attempting to cross the border into Ethiopia. Children close to conscription age caught trying to leave were sent to Sawa National Service training camp.

UNLAWFUL KILLINGS

Members of the security forces shot and killed at least 11 people in the capital, Asmara, in April. The killings took place when several national service conscripts tried to escape while they were being transported in an army truck. In addition to the conscripts, bystanders were also killed, according to reports. The killings had not been investigated by the end of the year.

PRISONERS OF CONSCIENCE

Thousands of prisoners of conscience and political prisoners, including former politicians, journalists and practitioners of unauthorized religions, continued to be detained without charge or trial and lacked access to lawyers or family members. Many had been detained for well over a decade.

In June, the Foreign Minister announced that 21 politicians and journalists who were arrested in September 2001, were alive and would be tried "when the government decides". He refused to disclose to their families the prisoners' whereabouts or the state of their health.^[1] They were detained after they published an open letter to the government and President Afwerki calling for reform and "democratic dialogue". Eleven of them were former members of the Central Council of the ruling party People's Front for Democracy and Justice. They remained detained without trial at the end of the year.

REFUGEES' AND MIGRANTS' RIGHTS

Thousands of Eritreans continued to flee the country. UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, registered 17,147 asylum-seekers in 44 countries between January and July alone. They faced serious human rights abuses while in transit and in destination countries. In one incident in May, Sudan deported hundreds of migrants to Eritrea after arresting them en route to the Libyan border. Eritreans also risked arbitrary detention, abduction, sexual abuse and ill-treatment on their way to Europe.

INTERNATIONAL SCRUTINY

The UN-mandated Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea submitted its findings to the UN Human Rights Council in June. It concluded that the Eritrean authorities were responsible for crimes against humanity committed since the country's independence in 1991 including enslavement, enforced disappearance, arbitrary detention, torture, rape and murder.

1. Eritrea: Immediately and unconditionally release prisoners of conscience ([News story](#), 21 June)

Copyright notice: © Copyright Amnesty International

Search Refworld

by keyword

and / or country

[Advanced Search](#) | [Search Tips](#)

Countries

- [Eritrea](#)

Topics

- [Arbitrary arrest and detention](#)
- [Extrajudicial executions](#)
- [Extrajudicial executions](#)
- [Flight by land, air or sea](#)
- [Forced labour](#)
- [Freedom of conscience](#)
- [Freedom of movement](#)
- [Freedom of religion](#)
- [Human rights monitors](#)
- [Migrant rights](#)
- [Military service / Conscientious objection / Desertion / Draft evasion / Forced conscription](#)
- [Refugees](#)
- [Security forces](#)