

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	576
Land:	Etiopien
Kilde:	Amnesty International
Titel:	Ethiopia: Authorities must stop using state of emergency law to silence peaceful dissent
Udgivet:	19. februar 2024
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	14. juni 2024



Document #2104541

AI – Amnesty International (Author)

Ethiopia: Authorities must stop using state of emergency law to silence peaceful dissent

Ethiopian authorities have used the state of emergency to silence peaceful dissent by arbitrarily detaining prominent politicians critical of the government and journalists, Amnesty International said today.

On 2 February 2024, Ethiopia's House of People's Representatives endorsed an extension of the state of emergency, which came into force in August 2023 amid escalating violence in Amhara region between government forces and Fano militia. During the last six months, the nationwide state of emergency has given authorities sweeping powers to arrest suspects without a court warrant, impose curfews, restrict the right to freedom of movement, and ban public assemblies or associations.

"The Ethiopian government must stop resorting to old tactics of denying basic rights through the pretext of emergency laws. Ethiopians face another armed conflict in Amhara region, a serious humanitarian crisis in Tigray, a dire security situation in Oromia and pervasive impunity nationwide. The role of the media and the right to freedom of expression is as vital as ever," said Tigere Chagutah, Amnesty International's Regional Director for East and Southern Africa.

"The extension of the state of emergency proclamation has not yet been published in the country's *Negarit Gazette*. This lack of transparency violates the right of access to information and the principle of legality, as Ethiopians are not able to determine whether their conduct amounts to a breach of the law, or whether the law continues to apply nationwide.

Five politicians and the three journalists have been arrested and remain detained without charge under the state of emergency, according to their family members interviewed by Amnesty International.

On 4 August 2023, the day the state of emergency was announced, government security forces arrested Christian Tadele, a member of the federal parliament known for his criticism of the prime minister Abiy Ahmed, and Kassa Teshager, a member of Addis Ababa City Council. Both were arrested at their homes in Addis Ababa.

Yohannes Boyalew, a member of the Amhara region council, was arrested on 15 August 2023 in Bahir Dar. Taye Denda, the former state minister of peace and a member of the Oromia regional council, was arrested on 12 December 2023, days after criticizing the prime minister over atrocities in Ethiopia saying, “you are an evil man who plays with blood”.

When the state of emergency was extended on 2 February 2024, federal security forces detained Desalegn Chane, a member of the federal parliament opposition party also known for his criticism of the prime minister.

Family members of detained politicians told Amnesty International that all of them remain in police custody without charge and have not been able to meet their lawyers. The family members have been able to see the detainees in what they describe as brief and heavily monitored visits.

“Arresting people en masse”

Since the declaration of the state of emergency in August 2023, Ethiopian media has reported mass arrests in the capital Addis Ababa and in Amhara region. On 6 February 2024, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed confirmed to the House of People’s Representatives that thousands had been detained, and many subsequently released after receiving “education”. He also confirmed that hundreds are still in detention under the state of emergency.

Ethiopian authorities must stop detaining people en masse with disregard for due process under the country’s state of emergency law. They must uphold the country’s national laws and international human rights obligations by either pressing charges or releasing everyone detained under the state of emergency, including high-profile politicians and journalists.

Tigere Chagutah

On 10 August 2023, Abay Zewdu, chief editor of Amara Media Center, was arrested in Addis Ababa. Ethiopian authorities also arrested journalist Bekalu Alamrew on 9 August 2023 and Belay Manaye of Ethio News on 13 November 2023. All three journalists remain in police custody. A lawyer who follows their case said that authorities have banned lawyers from visiting the journalists, and no charges have been pressed against them.

“Ethiopian authorities must stop detaining people en masse with disregard for due process under the country’s state of emergency law. They must uphold the country’s national laws and international human rights obligations by either pressing charges or releasing everyone detained under the state of emergency, including high-profile politicians and journalists.

“Amnesty International stands with Ethiopians calling for justice and accountability for human rights violations committed in Ethiopia. Systemic impunity continues to embolden perpetrators of crimes and several successive states of emergencies have placed people at risk of rights violations.”

Background

Both the current and previous Ethiopian administration have frequently utilized states of emergencies to arbitrarily crackdown on peaceful dissent. During the armed conflict in the Tigray, Amhara and Afar regions, thousands were ethnically profiled and detained, under the state of emergency, hundreds of kilometres from their homes in large makeshift camps without adequate food or medical services.

Since the latest state of emergency came into force, Amhara region has been under a command post led by the head of the National Intelligence and Security Service reporting directly to the prime minister. Following the outbreak of armed conflict in Amhara region in early August, the government has also limited access to information by imposing an internet ban and sporadically imposing complete communication blackouts in this region.

The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights provides that some rights may be restricted under a state of emergency but must be tailored to the “exigencies of the situation,” while other rights may not be derogated—suspended—under any circumstances. The United Nations Human Rights Committee, the independent expert body that monitors state compliance with the Covenant, has stated that restrictions on the right to freedom expression should be constructed and interpreted narrowly and the restrictions “may not put in jeopardy the right itself.” The African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights does not allow any derogation of human rights guaranteed under the Charter, even during a time of emergency. Ethiopia has ratified both the Covenant and the African Charter.

Amnesty International has also received reports of extra-judicial executions of civilians by Ethiopian National Defence Forces (ENDF) soldiers in the Amhara region and is investigating these allegations.

ecoi.net description:

State of emergency imposed in August 2023 has been prolonged by parliament on 2 February 2024; the government has used the state of emergency to arrest suspects without a warrant and to restrict basic rights such as freedom of movement and freedom of peaceful assembly

Country:

Ethiopia

Source:

[AI – Amnesty International](#) (Author)

Published:

19 February 2024

Original link:

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/02/ethiopia-authorities-must-stop-using-state-of-emergency-law-to-silence-peaceful-dissent/>

Document type:

Appeal or News Release

Language:

English

Available on ecoi.net since:

23 February 2024

Document ID:

2104541

Austrian Red Cross
Austrian Centre for
Country of Origin and
Asylum Research and
Documentation
(ACCORD)

Wiedner Hauptstraße
32, 1041 Wien
T +43 1 589 00 583
F +43 1 589 00 589
info@ecoi.net

Contact
Imprint & Disclaimer
F.A.Q.
Data Protection Notice

ecoi.net is run by the Austrian Red Cross (department ACCORD) in cooperation with Informationsverbund Asyl & Migration. ecoi.net is funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, the Austrian Ministry of the Interior and Caritas Austria. ecoi.net is supported by ECRE & UNHCR.

