

PRISONER PROFILE

Prisoner Name: **Mussie Eyob**

Location: **Eritrea**

Arrested: **February 2011**

Sentence: **November 2011**



Arrest and background

Mussie Eyob became a Christian in 2008. In 2011, while living in Saudi Arabia, he visited a local mosque in an area of Jeddah known as Haya Roda, to meet and talk with attendants there about Christianity. On February 12, he was arrested for preaching to Muslims and was imprisoned. Proselytising is a capital offence in Saudi Arabia, but following appeals from various human rights groups and individuals (including Release supporters), petitioning the Saudi authorities on Mussie's behalf, the Saudi authorities decided to deport him instead of carrying out the death sentence. He was deported back to Eritrea in November 2011.

One of Release's partners, Release Eritrea, who were the catalyst for the campaign to release Mussie, had suggested that he choose deportation to Ethiopia, but Mussie opted to be returned to Eritrea. He arrived in Asmara, the capital, at the beginning of November 2011 and about three weeks later, news reached Release Eritrea that he had simply disappeared into the vast prison system, where many Eritrean pastors and evangelists have been detained incommunicado. For a long time, because Mussie had been living abroad and was not well known to local Eritrean Christians, no one knew exactly where he was being held and had no way of communicating with him.

Recently we have received news that Mussie is in fact a prisoner in Me'etr prison which is located in North West Eritrea. Me'etr prison camp was opened in 2007, specifically to house Christians who had been arrested because of their faith. In 2009, at least two detained Eritrean Christians, Mogos Hagos Kiflom, 37, and Mehari Gebreneguse Asgedom, 42, died in Me'etr.

Presently Me'etr is not as brutal as some of the other prisons but it is situated in a dry barren inhospitable area with harsh weather conditions for most of the year. Currently there are believed to be around 89 prisoners in Me'etr, all of them Christians. 'Esther' from Helen Berhane's book, *The Song of The Nightingale* is also a prisoner in Me'etr. The prison itself is like a labour camp where prisoners are required to work hard on the land, something that is extremely difficult for both those prisoners who are older or infirm. Thankfully Mussie appears to be in reasonably good health and tries as he can to work on behalf of the sick and the weak.

Most prisoners in Me'etr have been there for more than six years; some for ten. All those imprisoned need and deserve our prayers. Pray also for their families. Before he was arrested Mussie supported his mother and sister.

Please pray

1. That all remaining prisoners in Me'etr will be released and reunited with their families.
2. That Christians in prison across Eritrea would experience God's presence, peace and power.
3. For continuing good health for Mussie and that God will use him to encourage the other prisoners.

Please write

When writing, please do not mention Release International, advance your political opinions or include anything which could be insulting to the authorities.

Send a card of encouragement to Mussie Eyob

Please consider sending a card or letter of encouragement to Mussie to let him know that he is being prayed for. Release will endeavour to forward these cards and letters to his family in Eritrea.

Mark cards for Mussie Eyob and send to: Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington, BR5 4RT.



Photo: Me'etr prison camp.

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Through our international network of missions, Release International serves persecuted Christians in more than 30 countries around the world by supporting pastors and Christian prisoners, and their families; supplying Christian literature and Bibles; and working for justice.

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