

PRISONER PROFILE

Prisoner Name: **Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel**

Location: **Eritrea**

Arrested: **May 2004**

Sentence: **Imprisoned indefinitely**



Arrest and background

Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel, the chair of the Eritrean Evangelical Alliance, senior pastor and leading figure in the Full Gospel Church, has been imprisoned since May 2004. He was arrested in an early morning raid on his home in Asmara, the capital of Eritrea. Dr Kiflu was a mathematics lecturer who was faculty head in the University of Asmara until 1999, when he became a full-time pastor. He has never been charged with a crime or brought before a court. Dr Kiflu has been held incommunicado ever since his arrest. His wife and four children have not been able to visit him. It is believed that Dr Kiflu was held in prison with other leading Christian pastors, who were arrested around the same time.

Their arrests followed the increased repression of Christians in Eritrea. In May 2002, the government banned all religious groups except the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches and Sunni Islam. Christians from banned churches began to be arrested and incarcerated in appalling conditions in shipping containers, open-air facilities in military camps, pits in the ground and police stations – all without charge or trial. The ban was part of a crackdown on anyone seen as posing a threat to the government. The suppression followed a Pentecostal revival, particularly among young Eritreans in military service.

Family

Dr Kiflu is married to Elsa and they have four adult children – son Yosias (28), twins Hermala (daughter) and Daniel, who are aged 25, and youngest son Senai (21). Dr Kiflu's church continues to be banned in Eritrea and has been forced underground. Christians constantly run the risk of arrest whenever they try to meet together, and when arrested may be initially taken to a detention centre before being transported to one of Eritrea's many prisons. Currently, there are an estimated 1,500 Christians imprisoned in Eritrea.

News and Updates

July 2014 – Reasonable health

News from inside Eritrea's prison network is extremely difficult to obtain. However, Release partners in the country and in the UK have said that Dr Kiflu appeared to be in reasonable health when last seen several months previously.

Send a card of encouragement to Dr Kiflu

Prison address – Karchele Prison, 2nd Police Station, Zone 7 Northern East, Zoba Maakel, Asmara, Eritrea

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

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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