



Inter-Parliamentary Union  
For democracy. For everyone.

# Eritrea

*Decision adopted by the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians at its 164<sup>th</sup> session (virtual session, 8 to 20 March 2021)*



Petros Solomon with his wife and their first born © Photo courtesy / Petros Solomon family



Sheriffo with his son Ibu (1988) © Photo courtesy / Aster Fissehatsion and Mahmood Sheriffo family

- ERI/01 - Ogbe Abraha
- ERI/02 - Aster Fissehatsion
- ERI/03 - Berhane Gebregziabeher
- ERI/04 - Beraki Gebreselassie
- ERI/05 - Hamad Hamid Hamad
- ERI/06 - Saleh Kekiya
- ERI/07 - Germano Nati
- ERI/08 - Estifanos Seyoum
- ERI/09 - Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo
- ERI/10 - Petros Solomon
- ERI/11 - Haile Woldetensae

## Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Murder
- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Enforced disappearance
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Inhumane conditions of detention – including denial of adequate medical care
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Impunity

## A. Summary of the case

There has been no information about the fate of the 11 parliamentarians concerned, as they were detained incommunicado on 18 September 2001 under accusations of conspiracy and attempting to overthrow the legal government after publishing an open letter in support of democracy. Persisting

## Case ERI-COLL-01

**Eritrea:** Parliament not affiliated to the IPU

**Victims:** 11 opposition members of the National Assembly of Eritrea (10 men and one woman)

**Qualified complainant(s):** Section I.(1)(a) and (d) of the [Committee Procedure](#) (Annex I)

**Submission of complaints:** September 2002 and 2013

**Recent IPU decision:** October 2015

**IPU Mission(s):** - - -

**Recent Committee hearing:** Meeting between the IPU Human Rights Programme with two Eritrean diplomats attending the 138<sup>th</sup> IPU Assembly as observers (Geneva, March 2018)

### Recent follow-up:

- Communication(s) from the authorities: - - -
- Communication from the complainants: January 2021
- Communication addressed to the authorities: Letter addressed to the President and Speaker of the National Assembly (January 2021)
- Communication addressed to the complainants: January 2021

serious concerns include non-compliance with legal safeguards, torture and ill-treatment, inhumane conditions of detention and denial of adequate medical care. They have never been formally charged before a court. Their parliamentary mandates were revoked in February 2002 by the National Assembly. It is feared that the 11 members of parliament may no longer be alive.

In November 2003, upon examination of a complaint concerning their situation, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights (ACHPR) found that the State of Eritrea had violated the right to liberty and security of person, the right to a fair trial and the right to freedom of expression. It urged the State of Eritrea to order their immediate release and to pay them compensation.

In her report of 11 May 2020, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea urged the authorities once again to take steps to adopt a constitution and reinstate the National Assembly as critical steps towards the restoration of the rule of law. She reiterated her concern about the "use of the practices of indefinite and arbitrary detention and enforced disappearance to suppress dissent, punish perceived opponents and restrict civil liberties", and mentioned reports of scores of people continuing to disappear in the Eritrean prison system, where "basic due process rights are not guaranteed [and] many are not allowed access to legal counsel, judicial review, family visits or medical attention". She specifically recalled that the 11 parliamentarians – known as the G11 – have been held incommunicado since September 2001, adding that the authorities have provided no information about their fate and have not complied with the decisions of the ACHPR regarding this case. The Government of Eritrea has denied the findings and refused to cooperate. The Eritrean authorities have not responded to IPU communications for years.

## B. Decision

The Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians

1. *Is extremely concerned* at the conclusions of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea, as they not only confirm its own findings with regard to the arbitrary detention of the 11 parliamentarians, but also give a comprehensive account of the horrendous backdrop of repression against which those conclusions have to be considered;
2. *Deplores*, once more, the Eritrean authorities' continued contempt for the most basic human rights of the 11 parliamentarians by keeping them in incommunicado detention for 20 years for exercising their right to freedom of expression in calling for the adoption of a constitution and the establishment of a democratically elected parliament;
3. *Is appalled* by the persistent silence of the authorities, all the more so in light of the uncorroborated information that only one of the 11 parliamentarians may still be alive and the fact that the continued uncertainty about the fate of the former parliamentarians leaves their families in absolute agony;
4. *Recalls* that impunity, by shielding those responsible from judicial action and accountability, decisively encourages the perpetration of further serious human rights violations, and that attacks against the life of members of parliament, when left unpunished, violate the fundamental rights of individual parliamentarians and of those they represent – even more so when leading figures of parliament are targeted in the context of a broader pattern of repression, as in the present case; *recalls* also that the widespread or systematic practice of enforced disappearance and torture constitute a crime against humanity; *stresses* the legitimate right of the relatives of the victims to know about the fate of their loved ones and to receive adequate compensation;
5. *Urges*, once more, the Eritrean authorities to provide official information on the fate of the 11 parliamentarians and to release them forthwith;
6. *Cannot but consider* that the international community, including the global parliamentary community, cannot remain silent in the face of these violations and cannot allow them to be erased from public memory; *renews its call* to all IPU members, permanent observers and parliamentary assemblies to take concrete actions for the resolution of this case, including by making representations to the diplomatic missions of Eritrea in their countries and raising the case publicly; and *hopes* to be able to rely on the assistance of all relevant regional and international organizations to achieve this objective;

7. *Requests* the Secretary General to convey this decision to the Eritrean authorities, the complainants and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea, as well as to any third party likely to be in a position to supply relevant information, and to continue making every effort to draw international attention to this case;
8. *Decides* to continue examining this case.