Inter-Parliamentary Union
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# Eritrea

***Decision adopted unanimously by the IPU Governing Council at its 218th session (Arusha, 9 October 2026)***



Aster Fissehatsion and Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo
© Ibrahim (Ibu) Mahmoud Ahmed



Mahmoud Ahmed Sheriffo with his son Ibu (1988) © Family of Aster Fissehatsion and Mahmoud Sheriffo.

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

**Case ERI-COLL-01**

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

**Victim(s):** 11 members of the opposition (10 men and 1 woman)

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

**Submission of complaint(s):** September 2002 and 2013

**Recent IPU decision:** October 2022

**IPU mission(s):** - - -

**Recent Committee hearing(s):** Hearing with the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea (October 2022)

**Recent follow-up:**
- Communication(s) from the authorities: - - -
- Communication from the complainants: January 2026
- Communication to the authorities: Letter to the President of Eritrea and the Speaker of the National Assembly (September 2026)
- Communication addressed to the complainants: January 2026

## Alleged human rights violations

- ✓ Murder
- ✓ Enforced disappearance
- ✓ Torture, ill-treatment and other acts of violence
- ✓ Arbitrary arrest and detention
- ✓ Inhuman conditions of detention
- ✓ Violation of freedom of opinion and expression
- ✓ Impunity
- ✓ Other: crimes against humanity

## A. Summary of the case

There has been no official information about the fate of the 11 parliamentarians concerned since they were detained incommunicado on 18 September 2001 shortly after publishing an open letter in support of democracy. They have never been formally charged before a court. Their parliamentary mandates

were revoked in 2002 by the National Assembly, which has not reconvened since then.

Since their disappearance, there have been sporadic reports by former prison guards who had sought asylum abroad alleging that the 11 parliamentarians were submitted to torture, ill-treatment and inhumane conditions of detention and denied medical care. 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 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. This decision was ignored by the authorities.

In June 2016, a Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea mandated by the United Nations (UN) Human Rights Council referred to the disappeared parliamentarians and other similar cases and found that it had reasonable grounds to believe that these violations constitute crimes against humanity. In the absence of institutional reform that would allow for accountability, it recommended that the matter be referred to the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court and urged all States to exercise their obligation to prosecute or extradite any individual suspected of these crimes present in their territory.

In her report of 11 May 2020, the then-UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea once again urged the authorities to reinstate the National Assembly as a critical step towards the restoration of the rule of law. She specifically recalled that the 11 parliamentarians – known as the G11 – have been held incommunicado since September 2001, adding that the authorities had provided no information about their fate and have not complied with the decisions of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights.

In his 2021 oral update to the Human Rights Council, the new Special Rapporteur echoed these statements and added that he saw no progress in the situation. He also added that it was difficult to speak of progress in Eritrea while the cases remained unresolved and that the "practice of arbitrary and incommunicado detentions in Eritrea has a serious impact on the life of many Eritreans". The Government of Eritrea has denied the findings and refused to cooperate. The Eritrean authorities have not responded to IPU communications for years. On 10 October 2022, the Committee on the Human Rights of Parliamentarians held a hearing with the Special Rapporteur, who called on the IPU to urge its members to exert pressure on the authorities and to renew the call made by the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea to prosecute those responsible, through the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court or under the principle of universal jurisdiction. In June 2026, the outgoing Special Rapporteur urged "the international community … to support efforts for truth, justice, accountability, and redress for victims".

## B. Decision

The Governing Council of the Inter-Parliamentary Union

1. *Strongly condemns* the continued and utter contempt of the authorities of Eritrea for the human rights of the 11 parliamentarians who were disappeared for having exercised their parliamentary mandate and their right to freedom of expression in calling for the establishment of a democratically elected parliament; *recalls* that, in light of the consistent conclusions of the Committee, the national authorities are under a duty to spare no effort to shed light on the fate of disappeared parliamentarians through diligent investigations; *recalls* also that failure to abide by this duty has systematically been interpreted as the government bearing responsibility for such disappearances; and *stresses,* in addition, the legitimate right of the relatives of the victims to know the truth about the fate of their loved ones and to receive adequate compensation;

2. *Strongly regrets* the persistent refusal of the authorities to engage with the IPU, the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances, the UN Human Rights Council's Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea, the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea, the African Commission for Human and Peoples' Rights, and all other international human rights mechanisms that have spoken out on this case; *regrets*, in particular, that the Eritrean authorities have never allowed the Committee to carry out an on-site mission to meet with relevant stakeholders and seek to resolve this case; and *hopes* that such a mission can take place as soon as circumstances allow;

3. *Emphasizes* 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 and personal integrity of members of parliament, when left unpunished, violate the fundamental rights of individual parliamentarians and of those they represent, all the more so when leading figures of parliament are targeted in the context of a broader pattern of repression, as in the present case; and *stresses* that, as defined in Article 7 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, the widespread and systematic practice of enforced disappearance, imprisonment and torture constitutes a crime against humanity;

4. *Concurs,* in light of the elements at its disposal, with the findings of the Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in Eritrea in its report of 8 June 2016 that the enforced disappearance of the 11 parliamentarians with the involvement of the Eritrean authorities amounts to a crime against humanity and that, given the unlikely prospect of proving accountability in Eritrea, other countries could exercise jurisdiction over Eritreans accused of crimes against humanity, in accordance with the principle of universal jurisdiction, as could the International Criminal Court, if the UN Security Council were to refer this situation to the Court; *calls on* all IPU Member Parliaments, therefore, to prompt the relevant authorities of their respective States to exercise their jurisdiction by prosecuting any individual responsible present in their territory for this crime against humanity, in keeping with the principles reflected in the Preamble to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court;

5. *Renews its call* on all IPU Member Parliaments, in particular members of the IPU African Group, and IPU observers to take concrete actions towards the resolution of this case, including by making representations to the diplomatic missions of Eritrea in their countries and by raising the case publicly, including within the UN Human Rights Council; *hopes* to be able to rely on the assistance of all relevant regional and international organizations, including the African Union, to ensure that justice is done in this case in line with the principles of the UN Charter and the IPU Statutes; and *calls on* all IPU Member Parliaments and observers to support the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea to that end;

6. *Requests* the Committee to continue examining this case and to report back to it in due course.