

**Notice:** Undefined index: et\_header\_layout in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

**Notice:** Trying to access array offset on value of type null in /home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public\_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php on line 1214

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# **ERITREA : Arrest of Catholic Bishop Fikremariam Hagos Tsalim and two priests**

## **Arrest of Catholic bishop Fikremariam Hagos Tsalim and two priests**

*By Jude Atemanke*

CAN (18.10.2022) – <https://bit.ly/3ggn1Q0> – Security officers in Eritrea have arrested and detained a Catholic bishop and two priests, a source in the Northeastern African country has confirmed to ACI Africa.

On Oct. 15, security agents reportedly arrested **Bishop Fikremariam Hagos Tsalim** at Asmara international airport after he arrived from Europe, BBC News **reported**.

A source in Eritrea who did not want to be named for security reasons confirmed the media reports about the arrest of Tsalim, the local ordinary of Eritrea's Segheneity Eparchy, who will turn 52 on Oct. 23, saying, "Yes, it is true. What the media is saying is true."

"We just need your prayers right now," the source told ACI Africa.

Two Catholic priests, Father Mihretab Stefanos, who is the parish priest of St. Michael's parish of Segheneity Eparchy, and Abbot Abraham, a member of the **Order of Friars Minor Capuchin** (Franciscan Friars), were also arrested and detained at Adi Abeto prison alongside Tsalim, Agenzia Fides **reported**.

The members of the clergy are being accused of highlighting violations of human rights in Eritrea in their homilies, the source said.

The human rights violations, the source added, include "imprisonment of parents (women and men), mobilization of deserved army people, young people [taken] by force to the war fronts, closing homes, [and] confiscation of animals from those people who have refused to go to war."

In May, officials of several United Kingdom-based Christian entities **expressed concern** about "continuing unjust" human rights violations in Eritrea.

In a letter sent to the Eritrean ambassador in the United Kingdom and Ireland, officials of **Christian Solidarity Worldwide** (CSW), **Church in Chains – Ireland**, Release Eritrea, **Human Rights Concern – Eritrea**, and the Eritrean Orthodox Church in the United Kingdom highlighted multiple instances of human rights violations.

“We remain concerned at the continuing unjust, arbitrary, and indefinite detention of tens of thousands of Eritrean citizens in harsh conditions, including hundreds of Christians imprisoned solely on account of their faith,” officials of the Christian organizations said in their May 20 letter addressed to Ambassador Estifanos Habtemariam Ghebreyesus.

The Christian leaders also said they were “dismayed by reports of Eritrean lives being lost in the war in neighboring Ethiopia, including those of conscripts and minors.”

In August, the government of Eritrea **took over** the **Hagaz Agro-Technical School** (HATS), a Catholic learning institution that the **Brothers of the Christian Schools** (LaSalle Brothers) established and were running.

The Hagaz Agro-Technical School “has been providing training in farm machinery, rearing of crops and animals, as well as soil conservation for the last 23 years,” the **BBC** reported.

This seizure is the latest in a series of government confiscations that have taken place in Eritrea since 2019. The government has cited a 1995 regulation that limits the activities of religious institutions as justification for the confiscation of property.

Catholic bishops in the Northeastern African nation opposed the regulation, arguing that the Church’s social services are not in opposition to the government.

*Photo: Bishop Fikremariam Hagos Tsalim of Eritrea’s Segheneity Eparchy | InfoVaticana*

**Further reading about FORB in Eritrea on HRWF webiste**

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**Notice:** Trying to access array offset on value of type null in `/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php` on line **1267**

**Notice:** Undefined index: `et_footer_layout` in `/home/hrwfe90/domains/hrwf.eu/public_html/wp-content/plugins/pdf-print/pdf-print.php` on line **1268**

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