



## UK Parliamentarians highlight disappeared Eritrean activists

Launched in Parliament in London, UK this week is an exhibition of images of Eritrean journalists, political activists, and government critics who were detained in September 2001. This followed the end of Eritrea's border war with Ethiopia, and the beginning of a crackdown on media and other freedoms in the country. The haunting images and panels feature individuals who have not been seen or heard of in the over 21 years since. The individuals shown are still pending criminal trial, and unable to contact loved ones.

In addition, in the past two decades, thousands more Eritrean individuals have disappeared into Eritrea's network of secret prisons, not having been tried of any crime, and their whereabouts and condition unknown, including by friends and family.

The exhibition organisers - Eritrea Focus, PEN Eritrea, and Amnesty International - hope that the prominent exhibition will focus minds on these forgotten activists, and bring attention to Eritrea's continued repression, including under systems of indefinite and enforced national military service, which is effectively life-long, and under which individuals have been forced to fight in neighbouring Ethiopia's costly war in Tigray.

**Patrick Grady MP**, who secured the exhibition in Parliament, and also serves as Vice-chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Eritrea, said: "Even one day spent detained without trial is a travesty, but 21 years is a tragedy. The continued disappearance of the individuals displayed in this exhibition makes a mockery of justice, especially for friends, family, and former colleagues who remain completely in the dark about the physical condition, or even whereabouts, of these detainees. Eritrea urgently needs democratic reforms, and the application of the rule of law. UK Parliamentarians will continue to speak out until the regime in Eritrea is properly held to account. As we mark both Human Rights Day, and International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime, this week, I hope this exhibition will encourage members of the public not to forget all those detained without trial and denied their human rights in Eritrea."

The exhibition will be formally launched at a reception in Parliament on Tuesday 6 December, where speaker remarks will be offered by the UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea, Dr Mohamed Abdelsalam Babiker; and a representative from the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. The exhibition will be on display from Monday 5 December to Friday 9 December.



The exhibition marks important days of international commemoration. 9 December is International Day of Commemoration and Dignity of the Victims of the Crime of Genocide and the Prevention of this Crime, and 10 December is Human Rights Day.

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

- The exhibition is not affiliated to the House of Commons nor the House of Lords. It has not been approved by either House or its committees. The views expressed in the exhibition are those of the organizers.
- The All-Party Parliamentary Group is a cross-party group of MPs and Lords which exists to raise awareness of the human rights abuses that are taking place in Eritrea; to examine and debate how the human rights situation in the country might be improved; and to raise matters of concern with, and make representations to, government and other policy makers.

**Media information/interview bids:** [appgoneritrea@outlook.com](mailto:appgoneritrea@outlook.com) / 0770 3549 167