



Refugee Documentation Centre (Ireland)
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Eritrea - Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on Monday 15 August 2016

Information on political unrest and available state protection since December 2015

A report issued in July 2016 by *Freedom House* commenting on events of 2015 states that:

“Created in 1994, the PFDJ is the only legal political party. The PFDJ and the military are in practice the only institutions of political significance in Eritrea, and both entities are strictly subordinate to the president. While certain ethnic minority groups in Eritrea face discrimination and oppression, members of minority groups do hold positions in the PFDJ, the military, and government” (Freedom House (14 July 2016) *Freedom in the World 2016*).

This document also notes that:

“Torture, arbitrary detentions, enforced disappearances, and political arrests are common” (ibid).

In June 2016 the *United Nations Human Rights Council* notes in a report that:

“...the Commission’s evidence indicates that there has been no material improvement in the enjoyment of the rights to freedom of expression, assembly and association. The systematic repression of these rights appears to be firmly entrenched. Interference with civil or political rights is punishable under Article 568 of Eritrea’s Transitional Penal Code” (United Nations Human Rights Council (8 June 2016) *Detailed findings of the commission of inquiry on human rights in Eritrea*, p.35).

This report also states:

“With respect to actual political dissent, the Government appears to have successfully stifled all forms of opposition, and those who spoke out in the past have generally disappeared, fled or been otherwise silenced” (ibid, p.59).

This report also points out that:

“While the majority of the cases of enforced disappearances documented by the Commission concern men, Eritrean women are also victims of this crime for the same reasons as men – including real or perceived opposition or threat to the Government – or because of their relationships with real or perceived political opponents, particularly as spouse” (ibid, p.64).

Amnesty International in May 2016 states:

“...Amnesty International has documented that throughout the 25 years of Eritrea’s independence the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ) has used arbitrary arrest and detention without trial to crush all perceived or real opposition, silence government critics and punish anyone who refuses to comply with

government-imposed restrictions on human rights” (Amnesty International (24 May 2016) *Eritrea: 25 years of independence: Whither the Eritrean dream?*, p.2).

In April 2016 the *United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office* notes in a report that:

“There remain numerous reports of individuals who have been extra-judicially detained for long periods of time for political reasons” (United Kingdom Foreign and Commonwealth Office (21 April 2016) *Human Rights and Democracy Report 2015 – Eritrea*).

The *United States Department of State* commenting on events of 2015 published a report in April 2016 which stated:

“Disappeared persons included those detained for political and religious beliefs...” (United States Department of State (13 April 2016) *2015 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices – Eritrea*).

It is also pointed out in this report that:

“The country is a one-party state. Political power rested with the PFDJ and its institutions. At times the government coerced persons to join the PFDJ” (ibid).

A document released in 2016 by the *Bertelsmann Foundation* points out that:

“The degree of political suppression remained extraordinarily high and arbitrary arrests without due process of law continued” (Bertelsmann Foundation (2016) *BTI 2016; Eritrea Country Report, 2016*, pp.5-6).

References

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This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

Sources Consulted

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