

EGYPT TWO ERITREANS RISK DEPORTATION

Two Eritrean nationals, Alem Tesfay Abraham and Kibrom Adhanom Okbazghi have been arbitrarily detained without any legal basis or access to asylum procedures in Egypt since 2012 and 2013, respectively. The two are facing forcible return to Eritrea, where they will be at real risk of arbitrary detention and torture. The Egyptian authorities must immediately halt any plans to forcibly return Alem Tesfay Abraham and Kibrom Adhanom Okbazghi to Eritrea and release them.

Please write to the Minister of the Interior urging him to:

- immediately halt any plans to forcibly return Alem Tesfay Abraham and Kibrom Adhanom Okbazghi to Eritrea
- release them as they are detained arbitrarily without any legal basis and grant them access to asylum procedures.
- Pending their release protect them from torture and other ill-treatment and ensure that they are held in conditions in line with international standards for the treatment of prisoners.

Write to

Minister of the Interior
Mahmoud Tawfiq
Ministry of the Interior
25, El Sheikh Rihan Street
Bab al-Louk, Cairo, Egypt
Fax: 011 202 2794 5529
Email: E.HumanRightsSector@moi.gov.eg and center@iscmi.gov.eg
Twitter: @moiegy

And copy

His Excellency Ahmed Mahmoud A. Abu Zeid
Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt
150 Metcalfe Street, Suite 1100
Ottawa, ON K2P 1P1
Phone: 613-368-4911
Email: egyptembottawa@gmail.com

Additional Information

Alem Tesfay Abraham and Kibrom Adhanom Okbazghi fled Eritrea to escape indefinite military conscription, which is one of the main drivers compelling people to flee Eritrea. According to a [2016 Amnesty International report](#), deserters are likely to face prolonged arbitrary detention, inhumane detention conditions and torture and other-ill-treatment. Furthermore, in 2015, [the UN Human Rights Council Commission of Inquiry on human rights in Eritrea found](#) that "with a few exceptions, those who have been forced to return to the country have been arrested, detained and subjected to ill-treatment and torture".

On 9 September, prison officials forced them to undergo Covid-19 PCR tests at a hospital outside the prison and to sign documents in Arabic that they were unable to read, before informing them about plans to deport them without specifying a date. Security forces arrested 42-year-old Alem Tesfay Abraham at the Salloum border crossing with Libya on 10 March 2012, while 37-year-old Kibrom Adhanom Okbazghi was arrested on 30 December 2013 in North Sinai Governorate. According to their lawyer, they have not been charged with any criminal offence since and have been repeatedly pressured to "voluntarily" return to Eritrea by officials at the migration department of the interior ministry. The two men have refused and have repeatedly requested to register for protection with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

On 23 July 2020, three UN independent experts wrote to the Egyptian government raising concerns about the two men's prolonged arbitrary detention and denial of the right to seek asylum. According to a refugee rights activist, shortly after this communication, prison officials verbally and physically assaulted the two men, and threatened to deport them. Going ahead with plans to deport them would violate the principle of non-refoulement, which prohibits returning anyone to a place where they would be at real risk of torture and other serious human rights violations.

Egyptian security forces [routinely arbitrarily arrest and detain](#) refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants in an irregular situation. As a state party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, the 1969 Organization of African Unity (OAU) Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Egyptian authorities are obligated to respect the principle of non-refoulement.