

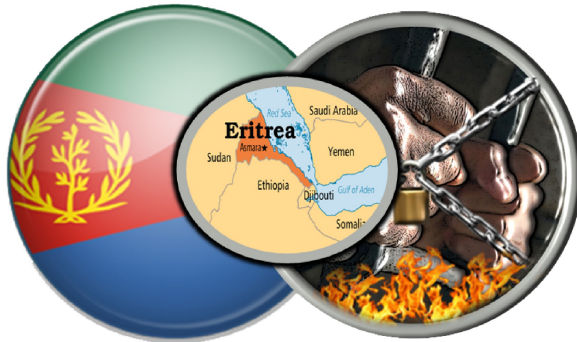


# PRAY FOR PERSECUTED BROTHERS & SISTERS

## Pray for the Persecuted Christians in Eritrea

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them - those who are mistreated - since you yourselves are in the Body also.

(Hebrews 13:3)



Total Population: 3,546,421

Self-Proclaimed Christian Population: 47% — **Evangelical Witness: 1%**

### What does persecution look like in Eritrea?

(Open Doors)

Despite almost half the population identifying as Christian, believers in Eritrea continue to suffer extreme persecution, making it still one of the hardest places in the world to follow Jesus.

The government recognizes only three denominations—Orthodox, Catholic and Lutheran. Those not part of these groups are at risk of severe persecution at the hands of the state. Gatherings are raided and believers arrested. The conditions facing Christians in prison can be inhumane. Some pastors have been incarcerated for over a decade and have faced solitary confinement. There are possibly more than 1,000 Christians imprisoned in Eritrea, with none formally charged. While some are released, many of these are moved to military service—which is no freedom at all—or house arrest. The ongoing detention of Christians shows that the government has no intention of relaxing its repressive policies.

Christians not recognized by the state are especially vulnerable to the everyday surveillance imposed by the state, with phone calls monitored, bandwidth kept slow and a network of citizens tasked with spying on their neighbors. This intrusive level of monitoring has led to Eritrea holding the infamous title of “Africa’s North Korea” (The Economist, Aug. 14, 2018).

Meanwhile, converts from Islam and the Eritrean Orthodox Church face harsh mistreatment from their families and communities.

## **Meet “Shiden”**

Shiden was imprisoned for more than a decade—simply for worshipping Jesus. He was arrested with 40 other people when he was caught during a secret worship service. He has been very damaged by the experience, but thankfully he is now improving.

“I will serve the Lord until I die; I want to serve the Lord for the rest of my days; I want to be a hero of the faith, too, and one day in the future claim the crown of righteousness that is laid up for me, which the Lord will award to me on that day.”

## **Eritrea seizes control of Catholic-owned college**

The Eritrean government has seized control of a Catholic-owned technical school, sources have told the BBC.

The Hagaz Agro-Technical School is run by the LaSalle Brothers organisation and has been providing training in farm machinery, rearing of crops and animals, as well as soil conservation for the last 23 years.

Another Catholic-owned training college, the Don Bosco Technical School in Dekemhare, is set to be handed over to the government in September.

In 2019, the Eritrean government took control of secondary schools and health facilities run by religious bodies across the country.

The government cited a regulation passed in 1995 that limited the activities of religious institutions in the Horn of Africa nation.