

Week 2: Pray for Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel (Eritrea)



Arrest and Background Dr Kiflu Gebremeskel, the chair of the Eritrean Evangelical Alliance and a leading figure in the Full Gospel Church, has been imprisoned since May 2004. He was arrested in an early morning raid on his home in Asmara, capital of Eritrea. Dr Kiflu was a mathematics lecturer who was faculty head in the University of Asmara until 1999, when he became a full-time pastor. He has never been charged with a crime or brought before a court. Dr Kiflu has been held incommunicado ever since his arrest. His wife and four children have not been able to visit him. It is believed that Dr Kiflu was held in a prison together with other leading Christian pastors who were arrested around the same time.

Dr Kiflu's arrest and that of other leading Eritrean pastors followed increased repression of Christians in Eritrea. In May 2002, the government banned all religious groups except the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches and Sunni Islam. Christians from banned churches began to be arrested and incarcerated in appalling conditions in shipping containers, open air facilities in military camps, pits in the ground and police stations, without charge or trial. The ban was part of a crackdown on anyone seen as posing a threat to the government. The crackdown followed a Pentecostal revival, particularly amongst young Eritreans in military service.

Family and church Dr Kiflu is married to Elsa and they have four adult children – son Yosias (28) who is currently in America, twins Hermala (daughter) and Daniel (son) who are aged 25 and youngest son Senai (21). Dr Kiflu's church continues to be banned in Eritrea but does meet from time to time and is doing well. Christians constantly run the risk of arrest whenever they try to meet together and when arrested they are generally thrown into prison without any trial. Sometimes other Christians are set free to make room for newly-arrested Christians. Currently, there are an estimated 1,500 Christians imprisoned in Eritrea.

Latest news from prison News from inside Eritrea prisons is extremely difficult to obtain and publicising such news is potentially harmful to the prisoner and those with whom he or she is held. There was no news whatever of Dr Kiflu for several years but he has been seen occasionally in recent years. While he has appeared frail to some observers in recent years, he appeared to be physically fit when last seen a few months ago.

Prayer Points

1. Pray that Dr Kiflu and the other long term prisoners would remain strong in health and faith.
2. Pray for God's blessing and strength for Dr Kiflu's wife, Elsa, and their children, Yosias, Hermala, Daniel and Senai and pray also for God's provision for all their needs.
3. Pray for an end to the repression of Christians in Eritrea and for the release of Dr Kiflu and all the other prisoners.