

Week 3: Pray for Kidane Weldou (Eritrea)



Pastor Kidane Weldou, who is in his early 70s, has been in prison in Eritrea for 21 years, with no release date set. He was senior pastor of the Full Gospel Church in the capital, Asmara (a church that is not permitted by the government) and was a member of the executive committee of Gideons International in Eritrea. Pastor Kidane was also involved in ministry among students and professionals from various other churches. Previously he was a secondary school biology teacher, with a science degree from Asmara University.

Pastor Kidane disappeared from the streets of Asmara in March 2005 and is believed to have been stopped and taken into custody by the security authorities. His car was found abandoned in the city and his family was not informed of his location nor of any charge against him. He is believed to be in Asmara's notorious maximum-security Wengel Mermera Central Criminal Investigation Centre, a labyrinth of dungeon cells where many prominent

political and military prisoners are thought to be incarcerated, as well as 21 church leaders who, like Pastor Kidane, have never been tried and have been held incommunicado since their arrests, with no permission for visits by family or lawyers. Seven senior church leaders have been in prison for over twenty years.

The Eritrean government banned all religious groups in 2002 except the Eritrean Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches and Sunni Islam. Since then thousands of Christians from banned denominations have been arrested and held in shocking conditions in shipping containers, open air facilities in military camps, pits in the ground, police stations and dungeons, without charge or trial. They suffer torture, hard labour, insanitary conditions and insufficient food, and they are denied visits from lawyers and family. Many Christian prisoners come under severe pressure to sign documents renouncing their faith and if they refuse they are brutally punished and threatened that their families will be arrested.

Even the permitted churches sometimes face interference and persecution; three of Pastor Kidane's fellow prisoners are Eritrean Orthodox priests associated with the Medhane Alem renewal movement within the Orthodox church.

Family

Pastor Kidane and his wife Tirhas have four daughters. His family has never been permitted to visit him.

Latest News

In October 2021 Open Doors reported that Pastor Kidane had been seen at an eye clinic and that it was suspected his eyes had been damaged by diabetes exacerbated by poor living conditions.

Prayer Diary

Sunday	Ask God to sustain and encourage Pastor Kidane in prison.
Monday	Pray for adequate treatment for his diabetes and eyesight.
Tuesday	Ask for protection for Pastor Kidane's mental health.
Wednesday	Pray that Pastor Kidane would be released.
Thursday	Pray for Tirhas and the couple's four daughters.
Friday	Pray for the other Christian leaders in Wengel Mermera.
Saturday	Pray for freedom for all churches in Eritrea.

