



Brussels, 18 September 2014
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STATEMENT

Statement by the Spokesperson on political prisoners in Eritrea

" We remain deeply concerned that the State of Eritrea continues to violate its international and domestic obligations regarding human rights particularly in the areas of arbitrary and inhumane detention, indefinite national service, lack of religious freedom, freedom of the media and freedom of speech.

We are particularly concerned by the continued detention without charge, trial or legal counsel – since 18 September 2001 – of a group of eleven prominent members of Parliament and of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, and also – since 23 September 2001 – of ten independent journalists, including the Eritrean-EU citizen Dawit Isaak. Despite repeated appeals by the international community, including the UN Human Rights Council and the EU, these people have been detained incommunicado for the last thirteen years, with all their rights suspended.

This conduct is in clear violation of obligations established in the UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), ratified by Eritrea, such as the prohibition against arbitrary detention.

The EU strongly urges the Government of the State of Eritrea to release these prisoners immediately and unconditionally, along with other prisoners detained for their political views and requests that all information on the whereabouts of these prisoners is made public and that they have access to their families and lawyers not least on humanitarian grounds.

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The EU calls on the Government of the State of Eritrea to honour its international human rights obligations and to urgently improve its human rights situation. The EU also calls on the Government to fully co-operate with the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Eritrea as well as to implement the recommendations made by the UN Human Rights Council during the Universal Periodic Review of the State of Eritrea in 2014."
