

# Prisoners of faith

**release**  
PRISONERS

EMAIL ALERT

MAY 2011

## Mussie Eyob Saudi Arabia



Photo : Release Eritrea

Eritrean Christian, Mussie Eyob, is facing a death sentence in Saudi Arabia after being arrested for sharing his faith with Muslims.

Eyob was detained by the Saudi authorities at a mosque in Saudi Arabia's second largest city, Jeddah, on February 12, 2011. He had gone there to meet and talk with local Muslims after sharing his faith and speaking about Christianity at the Eritrean Embassy for three days. Eyob, who became a Christian two years ago, was arrested for preaching to Muslims, an offence that carries the death penalty in Saudi Arabia.

The authorities, concerned that Eyob might be mentally ill, had him examined by doctors, who declared him fit for trial and sentencing. He was then transferred to the notorious high-security Briman prison.

Friends and family who visited Eyob on March 20, found that he had lost weight but appeared to be in relatively good spirits. Apparently he has stated that he is ready to die for his faith in Christ. His family are very concerned for his welfare in prison.

Eyob, who has a passion for the Gospel, felt a burden to share his faith with local Muslims, despite the danger.

Saudi Arabia follows a strict version of Islam, Wahhabism. The country claims that the Koran is

the basis for its constitution and that all its laws and regulations are promulgated in line with Sharia (Islamic law), which prescribes the death penalty for converts from Islam. Consequently most Saudi Christians are forced to practise their faith in secret.

Saudi citizens are denied the freedom to choose or change their religion and those who convert to Christianity from Islam will undoubtedly face opposition, both from authorities and from their Muslim family members.

The Government has stated that expatriate Christians, of whom there are many in Saudi Arabia, are free to worship in private. But the reality is that religious police (*mutawaah*) sometimes raid private worship services and detain those taking part. Any person involved in evangelism, including the distribution of literature, can face jail, expulsion or execution. Often false charges, such as drug-related allegations, are used against evangelists.

HELPING CHRISTIANS IMPRISONED FOR THEIR FAITH

**'I am in chains for Christ'** Philippians 1:13

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## PLEASE PRAY

- ▶ That God will encourage, strengthen, protect and guide Eyob in prison
- ▶ That the Saudi authorities will drop the charges against Eyob and release him
- ▶ For God to guide those in Saudi and around the world who seek to advocate on his behalf

## PLEASE WRITE

**When writing please do not mention Release International, advance your political opinions or include anything which could be insulting to the authorities.**

Informed partners have asked Release International to raise prayer for Mussie Eyob's case. While ongoing diplomacy is taking place, hopefully to facilitate his early release, we would ask you to keep this brother in your prayers.

**Please do not write to the authorities at this stage but send a card of encouragement assuring Eyob of your prayers**

Cards may be sent to: Mussie Eyob, C/O Release International, PO Box 54, Orpington, BR5 9RT

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