



Doc. 11868

23 April 2009

Actions in order to free Dawit Isaak

Written question No. 564 to the Committee of Ministers

by Ms Tina ACKETOFT, Sweden

It has now passed 2769 days (23 April 2009) since the Swedish-Eritrean journalist Mr Dawit Isaak was imprisoned in Asmara, Eritrea.

Mr Dawit Isaak is one of the founders of Eritrea's first independent newspaper, "Setit", which supported democratic reforms. In 2001 Setit published a regime-critical letter signed by 15 dissident politicians. Shortly afterwards the politicians and a number of journalists were apprehended, among them the Swedish citizen Mr Dawit Isaak. He has since then been incarcerated without any legal proceedings or sentencing. No charges have been presented against him.

After 2001 the democratic development in Eritrea has deteriorated rapidly. No free elections have been held, political oppression is common, and no free press is allowed. Despite diplomatic efforts, petitions from the Swedish Parliament and a number of organizations, little progress has been made in the efforts to release Mr Dawit Isaak.

Eritrea Watch for Human Rights and Democracy (EWHRD) has recently reported that Mr. Dawit Isaak was hospitalized in Asmara. He is not permitted to receive any visitors, and only one doctor is allowed to treat him. It is however known that he suffers from high blood pressure. Concerns are now rising for his state of health.

It is now a matter of extreme urgency to pull all forces together to intensify the dialogue with the Eritrean authorities with the aim to free Mr. Dawit Isaak. Hence, within the scope of the Council of Europe, which means can be taken to exert an influence on the Eritrean authorities in the case of the Swedish citizen and journalist Dawit Isaak?

Signed:

ACKETOFT Tina, Sweden, ALDE

