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Waiting for news of Aster

03 December 2008 at 10:23 by **Kaymer**

Tags: **Aster Fissehatsion Eritrea**

Aster Fissehatsion

Many terrible stories come across my desk each day working as a campaigner for individuals at risk. But it is when you speak to the family members of those individuals that it really brings home just how deep, wide-reaching and devastating the affects of human rights abuses can be.

One of the long-term cases we have been working on for a while now is that of [Aster Fissehatsion](#), former politician and critic of the Eritrean government. She and ten other high-profile Eritreans have been held by the government since 2001 for publishing a public letter requesting a more democratic government. Aster has never been charged or tried, but the worst of it is that her family have no idea where she is and have had no news of her at all for the seven years since her arrest.

I was in touch with her brother-in-law recently. Aster is part of this year's Greeting Cards Campaign and he wanted to say thank you to all the people from around the UK who have sent a greetings card to the family so far. He said:

“ Thanks to the AI community, we have witnessed the uplifting feeling of hopefulness in our moments of despair. We regained our optimism because someone like you gave us a helping hand. We know it may be dark now but we also know that the ever-dependable morning will come.

We received hundreds of messages from you over the last few weeks – truly inspirational messages that gave us not only hope but also fortitude. We, as recipients and beneficiaries of your thoughtfulness, are thrilled by the fact that there is someone out there who cares about our family's plight. We know now what the power of compassion can do. Thank you!”

I simply can't imagine what it must be like not to have any idea where your sister is being kept and how she is being treated. I have four sisters myself and I can only think that it must be a daily agony for Aster's family as they wait for news of her. Please [send an appeal letter](#) to the Eritrean authorities and demand her release. She did nothing more than stand up for what's right: she and her family are paying an outrageous price.

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4 Comments

B. Welderufael

3rd December 2008

Dear Sir/Madam

I am deeply touched by the inhumane treatment of Aster by the Eritrean authorities. As I remember Aster, I am also reminded of those who are suffering in the various dungeons of Eritrea simply because they have an opinion about certain things. Or a belief and conviction about God, and some of them they simply expressed how they feel about their environment. If the GOE thinks they are accomplishing anything by making their own people suffer they are wrong. Aster and the likes tears will one day be vindicated.

I say to the family, the Eritrean people and the people of the world will stand by you until Aster is freed.

Keep praying and do not despair.

Haile A.

4th December 2008

One day, as long as we do not lose hope, justice will prevail. History will remember the government unkindly for taking a

draconian measure to silence its critics.

Aster, whether dead or alive, will continue to be an inspiration to many us.

AH

TM 5th December 2008
Dear Bisirat & Dawit, The Eritrean cause that mobilized the generation of Aster was about standing up against tyranny. It was a struggle for justice and human dignity. Those who freed Eritrea from tyranny deserve honour and dignity. Aster, her comrades, all those arrested without charge and their families deserve justice which can only mean to have their day in an independent court or immediate release.

P E Smit 8th December 2008
Bisrat, Dawit and Family in Eritrea and abroad, you are in my thoughts. An injustice like the present one cannot continue forever. I salute Aster and her comrades for their brave stand and pledge to keep their cause alive. Their fight for democracy is an inspiration to all who love freedom. Nobody deserves to be incarcerated for speaking the truth and the Eritrean government need to be reminded that they cannot silence the voice of reason. Aster and comrades, you are heroes and I'm joining all those who demand your release