

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/eritrea-sad-anniversary-for-eritrean-press-02-06-2015,47955.html>

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Africa - Eritrea

## Sad anniversary for Eritrean press freedom

5000 days too many

2 June 2015

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**Dawit Isaak**, a journalist with Swedish and Eritrean dual nationality who used to work for the Eritrean newspaper *Setit* in Asmara, is spending his 5,000th day in prison today. He has never been sentenced or even charged.

And he is not alone. Other journalists such as **Seyoum Tsehaye**, **Temesgen Gebreyesus** and **Emanuel Asrat** were also arrested in September 2001, when the government closed all independent media in Eritrea. More have been arrested since then. A total of seven Eritrean journalists have died in prison.

This makes Eritrea Africa's largest prison for media personnel. It has been at the very bottom of the [Reporters Without Border press freedom index](#) for the past seven years.

*"The international community must confront the Eritrean government,"* said Clea Kahn-Sriber, head of the Reporters Without Borders Africa desk. *"It is unacceptable that the European Union, a union based on respect for democratic values, supports this regime and tolerates its awful human rights record."*

In Sweden, Isaak's European home country, many events are being organized today to mark this sad anniversary.

Isaak's eldest daughter, Bethlehem Isaak, has spent the night in a mock-up of the completely dark cell in which the authorities are believed to be holding him.

In an op-ed published today in Sweden's biggest morning paper, *Dagens Nyheter*, the Swedish section of Reporters Without Borders has criticized EU plans to triple aid to Eritrea despite its shocking human rights record.

Read the op-ed (in Swedish) [here](#)

Drafted with the support of the Kampala-based East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project, it accuses Asmara of reaching outside the country in its determination to suppress freedom of expression. Eritrean journalists who have fled to nearby Uganda and Sudan continue to be persecuted by Eritrean government agents. Eritrean exiles have been threatened and even beaten up government supporters in Sweden and Italy for criticizing the regime.

This evening, a broad coalition of Swedish civil society groups, including the Swedish section of Reporters Without Borders, is organizing a public gathering in Stockholm that aims to attract at least 5,000 participants to draw attention to the magnitude of the 5,000 days that Isaak has been unlawfully detained.

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You can download those documents on our website :

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