

Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/soudan-detained-eritrean-journalist-faces-27-10-2011,41305.html>

Africa - Sudan

Deportation risk

Detained Eritrean journalist faces possible forced repatriation from Sudan

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Reporters Without Borders expresses its profound concern after the arrest on 24 October of the Eritrean journalist **Jamal Osman Hamad** in Khartoum and calls on the Sudanese authorities to release him.

In the light of warmer relations between the governments of Eritrea and Sudan, the press freedom organization is also concerned about the fate of Eritrean journalists and human rights campaigners who have taken refuge in Sudan.

"The situation faced by Jamal Osman Hamad is extremely worrying," it said. "The journalist has been held incommunicado for three days and we fear he may be deported to Eritrea, where the state of press freedom is among the most alarming in the world. Forced return to his own country would condemn him to an intolerable fate. We ask the Sudanese authorities not to expel Jamal Hamad to Eritrea and call on the European Union and the international community to take immediate action to prevent such a tragedy. Jamal Hamad must be released as soon as possible."

Hamad's arrest took place less than a week after an official visit to Sudan by President Issaias Afewerki when he and his Sudanese counterpart Omar Al-Bashir inaugurated a new road linking their two countries in the Sudanese town of Kassala,

On 17 October, 300 Eritreans were expelled from Sudan to their home country without their cases being referred to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

"Reporters Without Borders believes the criticism of the Sudanese authorities' attitude by the UNHCR is well founded. This event unfortunately demonstrates that the U.N. body is not in a position to guarantee the safety of those who have fled persecution by the Asmara government. We therefore ask the UNHCR to appeal to third countries to grant visas urgently to Eritrean human rights campaigners who have taken refuge in Sudan," said Reporters Without Borders secretary-general Jean-François Julliard.

Hamad, a journalist and editorial writer who runs the opposition website *adoulis.com*, was summoned by Sudanese security forces in Khartoum on 24 October and is held at an unknown location in the capital. His mobile phone has been switched off since his arrest and none of his colleagues or members of his family have been able to obtain any news of him.

Hamad has worked in Sudan for a number of years and is known for his criticism of President Afewerki and for his articles on the political situation in the Horn of Africa.

Thirty-four journalists are currently in prison in Eritrea because of their professional activities and four reporters have died in custody in the past ten years. The country is bottom of the list of the Reporters Without Borders world press freedom index for 2010.

To mark the 10th anniversary on 18 September of the large-scale round-up of journalists and the closure of all privately-owned print media, Reporters Without Borders has launched an international publicity campaign about Eritrea in English, French, Spanish, German, Swedish, Italian and Tigrinya. [Click here](#) and [here](#) to download the posters. It is also releasing an updated [list of journalists detained in Eritrea](#) and recalls the fate of Paulos Kidane, who was

gunned down in 2007 as he tried to cross from Eritrea into Sudan.

Photo of the Eritrea campaign
