

# Reporters Without Borders

<http://www.rsf.org/ethiopia-anti-terror-law-denounced-as-a-21-09-2011,41031.html>

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Africa - Ethiopia

Repressive law

## Anti-terror law denounced as a serious challenge for the media, a journalist named in WikiLeaks cable flees abroad

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Reporters Without Borders voiced concern today for the safety of Ethiopia's journalists after a long-time government critic was arrested along with four opposition party members on 15 September in Addis Ababa, becoming the latest in a series of local and foreign reporters to be held on "terrorism" charges.

Ethiopia's 2009 "anti-terrorist" law has today become "the most serious challenge for the country's journalists," secretary-general Jean-François Julliard said, "and the arrests and other measures it involves provokes fear and uncertainty among the media.

"We understand that some of the Ethiopian media have indeed been extremely virulent and some journalists have pushed things to the limit, taking partisan stands and acting as mouthpieces for opposition figures. But we deplore the threat this law poses to anyone wanting to express themselves freely."

In the decade since the 11 September 2001 attacks, repressive "anti-terrorist" laws had been enacted in several regions of the world, he said. "We have always condemned these measures, which often allow regimes to crack down on the media and on freedom of expression under the pretext of national security."

[Eskinder Nega](#) and the four opposition politicians were arrested for supposed involvement in preparing "terrorist acts" and are suspected of links to "Ginbot 7" an opposition group which the parliament recently labelled as "terrorist" and which is led by Berhanu Nega, an exile in the United States.

Earlier this summer, four journalists – **Johan Persson** and **Martin Schibbye** (both Swedish) and two Ethiopians, **Reyot Alemu** and **Woubeshet Taye** – were arrested and charged under the anti-terrorist law.

[More information](#)

Another journalist, **Argaw Arshine**, who was named in a WikiLeaks document, fled the country after being repeatedly interrogated and reportedly forced by police on 8 September to say who told him the government planned to close the country's then-main independent and critical newspaper, *Addis Neger*.

Government spokesman Bereket Simon denied anyone had asked Arshine to reveal his sources and noted that this would be illegal. "We have no problem in allowing him to return," he said.

Reporters Without Borders calls on the Ethiopian government to guarantee a fair and transparent legal process and to take steps to assure the press that the law will not be used to persecute critical journalists and stifle dissident voices.

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