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## ERITREA New prayer chain initiative focuses on suffering of Eritreans worldwide

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The Eritrean Paltalk community has started a 24-hour prayer chain for Eritrea in response to the suffering of Eritreans both inside the country and in countries like Libya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt and Israel, where they live as refugees.

The prayer chain began on 1 July and will run for three months until 30 September. Poverty and food shortages, as well as an extremely repressive government, mean that many Eritreans flee the country to seek refuge elsewhere. Among them are Eritreans who have been denied the right to freedom of religion. Many Christians are amongst the estimated 20,000 people currently in detention, where many are slowly dying as a result of the harsh prison conditions. The coordinators of the prayer initiative are inviting people worldwide to join them by praying for at least one hour per day for an end to the suffering of the Eritrean people.

Eritrean refugees in Libya, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt and Israel are living in conditions of extreme suffering, and many are feeling increasingly hopeless. Countries like Libya are known to facilitate “selective returns” of escapees who are of special interest to the Eritrean regime, while on its border, Israel practices the policy of “hot returns” of refugees to Egypt, where the authorities regularly shoot refugees who attempt to cross into Israel. Once returned to Eritrea, they are subject to imprisonment, mistreatment, and possibly even death.

Tedros Abraham, an Eritrean journalist and former prisoner, said, “As Christians we sincerely believe that it’s only God who can heal the broken heart of our people and bring a spiritual revival to our land. We are too weak to change the situation alone, but through our prayer to God indeed we can change things for good if we are united in crying to God for mercy on his people. Therefore we cordially invite all concerned people inside and abroad to join us in this prayer for at least one hour per day. “

Christian Solidarity Worldwide is very concerned about the plight of 230 refugees in Libya, who were moved earlier this week from Misrata prison to Sabha detention camp on the border of the Sahara desert, where they are being held in a dark, single prison cell with little food and water. They have endured beatings overnight, and many have sustained injuries including fractures.

CSW’s National Director Stuart Windsor said, “It is a privilege to stand in prayer and solidarity with the Eritrean people, and especially with Eritrean refugees, who in many cases, are subjected to the most appalling treatment by countries that have an international legal duty to assist them. We commend this new prayer initiative and invite all who can to join in prayer for the Eritrean people”

### Notes to Editor

1. Paltalk is an online networking forum.

2. CSW first reported the movement of the refugees from Misrata to Sabha on 30 June. See the full release on the CSW website, [www.csw.org.uk](http://www.csw.org.uk)