

08 July 2020

Bell Ribeiro-Addy, MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

Dear Bell Ribeiro-Addy,

Re: Gross Human Rights Abuses, Indefinite Slave Labour and Genocide alert in Eritrea

We, the undersigned, are members of the **Yiakl* Eritrean Mass Movement for Justice based in your constituency. We are compelled to write to highlight the extremely dire situation Eritreans are facing both inside and outside Eritrea. The state of Eritrea is an oppressive dictatorial regime only comparable to that of North Korea. We can attest to the abusive situation in Eritrea from our personal experiences, but it has also been documented extensively both by the UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea (A/HRC/41/53) and other Human Rights agencies.

The British government, in partnership with the EU, has supported and paid in good faith “multi-aid projects’ inside Eritrea. All these projects use forced labour in the form of National Service Conscripts - a form of servitude described as ‘slavery’ by the UN. We are attaching a recent report by Human Rights Watch on this issue. Please kindly read it – the reality it reflects is truly horrific.

We are alarmed that the current situation in Eritrea may have genocidal intent, which is contrary to UN Convention 1948 on genocide Articles 1 and 2.

We would, therefore, kindly request the following:

1. The British government to put strong pressure on the Eritrean government to abolish indefinite servitude in the form of National Service in line with the findings and recommendations of the UN’s Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea.
2. The British government to put strong pressure and pre-conditions on the Eritrean government to reform its policies which clearly breach the human rights of its citizens - especially prisoners who have never been charged nor presented to a court of law, but kept imprisoned without due legal process and incommunicado for decades.
3. The British Government to use its diplomatic clout and alert the UN Security Council of the looming imminent genocidal intent on the Southern Red Sea (Afar) region and other parts of Eritrea. The Southern Red Sea people have been denied access to the Red Sea which has been their livelihood from time immemorial. As a result, the population has faced displacement famine with no humanitarian relief. This is tantamount to an intention to commit genocide on the part of the State of Eritrea.
4. We plead to the British government to liaise with UNHCR considering taking up Eritreans in concentration camps in Libya in proportion with other willing countries on humanitarian grounds. Separate campaign underway.

Thanking you in anticipation.

*Yiakl (meaning: ENOUGH in Tigrigna) is an international popular Mass Movement seeking justice in Eritrea.

NB: A recent statement from the Human Right Watch, Feb 2020, is attached separately.

References:

- Recent Human Right Watch report: “Statement from Human Rights Watch on EU aid to Eritrea-Feb 19 20”. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/02/19/statement-european-parliaments-committee-development-human-rights-situation-eritrea>
- UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Eritrea (A/HRC/41/53): Situation of Human Rights in Eritrea–Report of the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Eritrea,16/05/2019: https://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/41/53 or here <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G19/140/37/PDF/G1914037.pdf?OpenElement>
- Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948 Articles 1 and 2. <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CrimeOfGenocide.aspx>
- Please see “Focus Eritrea” campaign on anti-slavery in Eritrea. <https://eritrea-focus.org/human-rights-situation-in-eritrea/>