

Three journos held since 2001 die in Eritrea prison camp

After several weeks of investigating reports from sources in Eritrea and from prison guards who fled the country, Reporters Without Borders has been able to confirm that three more journalists - Dawit Habtemichael, Mattewos Habteab and Wedi Itay - have died in the northeastern prison camp of Eiraeiro. All three had been held since late 2001.

Another journalist arrested in February 2009, whose identity has not been established with certainty, has also reportedly died in detention - in his case, in Abi Abeito military prison near the capital, Asmara.

The only good news is that Tesfalidet "Topo" Mebrahtu, a well-known sports journalist who worked for state-owned radio Dimtsi Hafash and state-owned Eri-TV, was "released on bond" (he is still under surveillance, with relatives acting as guarantors) in early 2012 after being held for 10 months.

"While all eyes are turned on Syria, another, less visible, tragedy is being played out in Eritrea, a country forgotten by the international community although it is the world's leading media freedom violator and Africa's biggest prison for journalists," Reporters Without Borders said.

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