

Joint call for the attention of the Ethiopian Government on Migrants in Saudi Prisons

Following the decision and determination of the Saudi Arabian kingdom to expel millions of migrants from its territory, countries have been repatriating their citizens back home. The Ethiopian government has also been making numerous efforts to repatriate its citizens who were in dire situation in Saudi Arabia and past efforts had been successful in making sure that thousands of Ethiopians returned home. Victims are telling various media outlets about deaths, inhumane treatments and serious human rights abuses they have been suffering in Saudi Arabia prisons. According to a recent report by Al-Ain Amharic on January 3, 2022, up to 500 people were tortured in one cell and refugees were also reported to having said that “cells were open only when a prisoner dies”. Still, despite the repeated call for action by human rights organizations and NGOs including Human Rights Watch and International Organization for Migration (IOM), thousands of Ethiopian migrants in Saudi prisons are living in horrifying conditions locked up in overcrowded and dirty cells, starving, mistreated and beaten, and in bad need of medical attention and provision of basic necessities. The situation is worse for women and children as well. They are detained in harsh conditions increasing their vulnerability. On the other hand, one of the most important traditional responsibilities of the government is protecting its citizens from any kind of inhuman and harmful treatment. This responsibility of the government goes beyond its border. The government should always prioritize the safety and security of its citizens and it should take diplomatic measures if its citizens face any violation by state or non-state actors abroad.

Therefore we call the attention of the Ethiopian government to:

- Request the Saudi Arabian government to immediately and significantly improve detention conditions, end torture, and other ill-treatment against Ethiopian citizens, and ensure detainees have access to adequate food, water, sanitation, health care, accommodation, and clothes.
- Organize repatriation flights for Ethiopian nationals in Saudi Arabia and bring them home as soon as possible.

We also urge all human rights organizations and media to be the voice of Ethiopians who are subjected to grave human rights violations and urge the Saudi Government to abide by the United Nations Human Rights Charter and other international laws and respect the rights of refugees and Prisoners.

