

## 200 Eritreans Languishing in Libyan Prison

Department of Information and Culture  
Eritrean People's Party  
August 19, 2009

Eritrean People's Party sources reported that the Libyan authorities are detaining more than 200 Eritreans, among them 52 women, 8 children, and 4 physically disabled. Two of the female detainees are pregnant, while 10 others have serious health conditions.

The Libyan authorities are holding the Eritrean detainees in Danfuda prison, in the northern town of Benghazi. The refugees were arrested at the Libyan border towns of Benghazi and Kufhran as they were attempting to enter the country illegally.

Some of the Eritrean detainees have already spent time in Danfuda detention facility as long as four months to one and half year, denied of their rights to have access to a lawyer or any other legal protection and representation, including denial of their right to seek political asylum.

Few of the detainees who managed to escape after paying close to \$1000 US dollars of bribe to the prison guards recounted the overcrowded detention facility, the mistreatments and physical abuses by prison guards, the poor sanitation and the lack of health care services. The same eye witnesses say the Eritrean detainees in Danfuda are consistently facing inadequate supply of food and water in addition to the unbearable temperature inside the prison.

In the past, the Libyan government had forcibly deported hundreds of Eritrean refugees back to Eritrea who upon their arrival in Eritrea were arrested and placed in prison. Of those arrested, some of them are still being held in incommunicado, facing constant abuse and inhumane treatment, and others were tortured to death.

The 200 hundred Eritrean detainees are feared that the Libyan Authorities may forcibly deport them back to Eritrea where they could face a risk of torture, imprisonment, and other human rights violations.

The detainees are pleading with and requesting Eritreans to engage in talks and contacts, focused on bringing the plight of their situation to the attention of UNHCR, human rights organizations, and other concerned bodies.

In other news, most recently the Israeli authorities rounded up and arrested many African refugees in Tel Aviv, among them Eritreans, and transported them to Shalom, Barshema, and Elat. Eritrean People's Party sources say Israeli authorities are reportedly trying to keep refugees out of Tel Aviv and contain them in small towns. Sources further added that the refugees were rounded up from their work places without receiving their wages and hastily transported to those small towns. Many business owners in Tel Aviv who had hired refugees took advantage of the situation and disregarded payment of wages to the refugees.